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THE HOLY COMMUNION

SERMONS BY

J.P.F. DAVIDSON, M.A.







THE HOLY COMMUNION.

A COURSE OF SERMONS

PREACHED ON THE

SUNDAYS IN LENT AND EASTER DAY, 1871,

IN THE

Parish Church of Chipping Sodbury,

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

BY

J. P. F. DAVIDSON, M.A.;

VICAR.



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P R E F A C E.

THESE Sermons profess to be no more than a very elementary exposition of the high Subject with which they deal.

They were written originally, not for publication, but as a parochial instruction on the Holy Eucharist during the Sundays in Lent. And their main purpose was, to draw out from the Scriptures, and set forward in plain and simple language, the Sacramental Mystery, with a view to removing some prevailing misconceptions, and putting before the congregation the essential connection of that Mystery with other mysteries of the Christian Faith, and with the Christian Life.

In this attempt I have been much aided by

the suggestive Pamphlet of the Rev. W. W. English, "*Thoughts on the Holy Communion*," and the valuable little "*Treatise on the Holy Eucharist*," by the Rev. J. R. West.

In many places, I am aware, correctness of style has been sacrificed to plainness of speech ; technical accuracy of theological statement to the desire to make the truth intelligible.

But I have preferred printing the Sermons almost entirely as they were preached, in the hope that they may thus serve, to those who listened to them, as a little Memorial of holy hours passed together in the House of God ; and perchance also, by their very plainness, be of some use to a wider circle of readers.

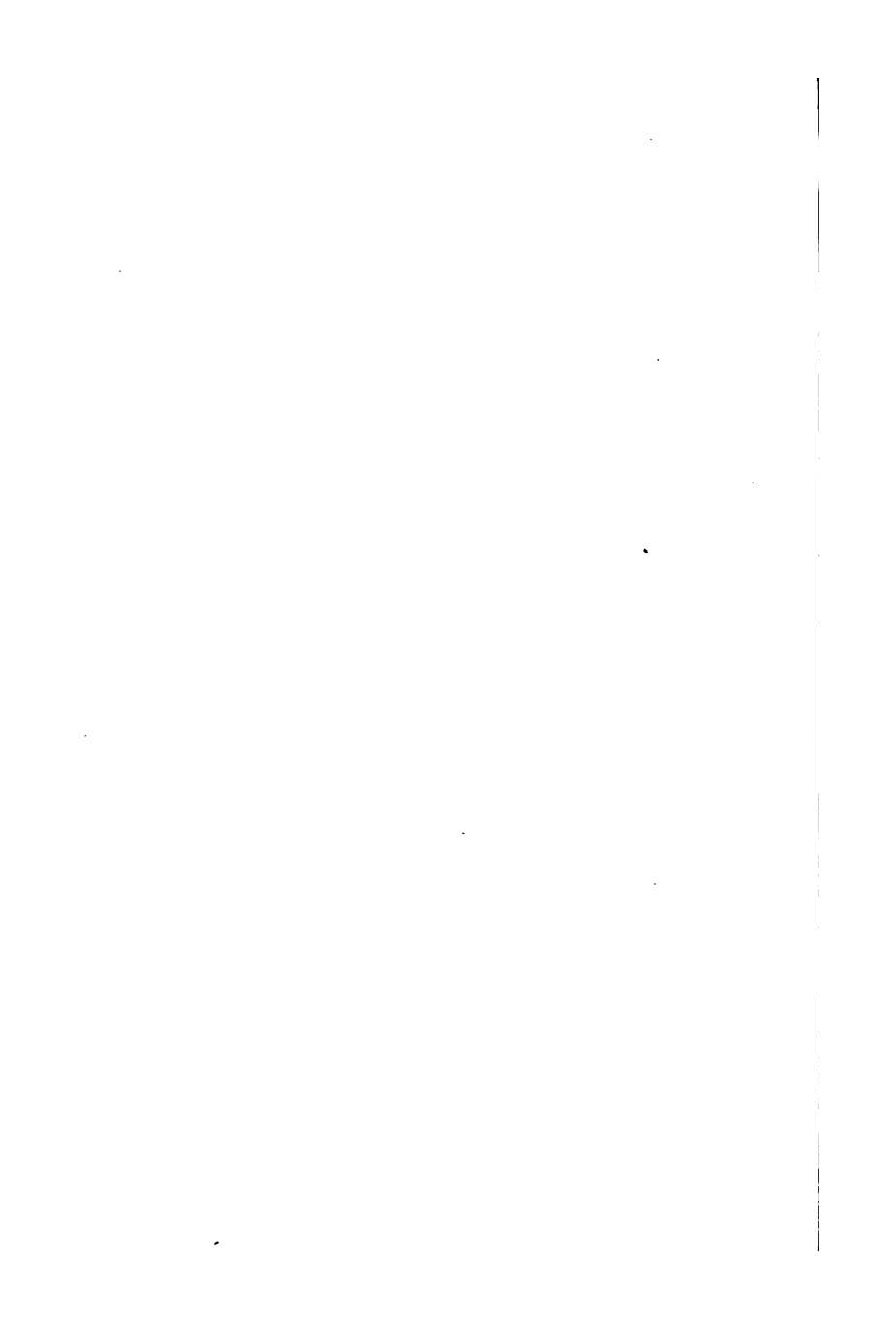
The more my experience of parochial work is enlarged, the more I feel convinced that, in our country parishes no less than in our towns, the real root of the wide-spread unbelief in Sacramental Grace lies deeper than in any mere difference of so-called Church views, and is, in fact, part of that practical Scepticism which, under whatever name, sets itself, often uncon-

sciously, against the Supernatural character of the Christian Revelation as a whole.

Faith in the Holy Mystery of the Eucharist is more deeply connected than many think with faith in Revelation and in the Person of CHRIST.

May GOD be pleased to overrule for good all defects and imperfections in the following Sermons, and mercifully to vouchsafe His Blessing on them, for His Dear SON's sake, JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

CHIPPING SODBURY VICARAGE;
Ascensiontide, 1871.



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SERMON I.

THE COMMANDMENT.

S. JOHN XIV. 15, AND S. LUKE XXII. 19.

“If ye love Me, keep MY COMMANDMENTS.”

“THIS DO in remembrance of Me.”

I BEGIN to-night a series of Lectures on the nature and meaning of the Holy Communion, to be continued, God willing, on the Sunday evenings through Lent.

The subject is one which all thinking persons will agree to be especially suited to the season.

The sufferings of JESUS, ending in His death upon the Cross, are before us. In what way can we commemorate them more fitly, than by turning our minds to HIS OWN MEMORIAL of them,—that Holy Ordinance which He Himself appointed, as you will remember, in connexion with His precious Death, and *com-*

manded us to observe in perpetual memory of It?

So the Service in our Prayer Book, speaking of the institution of the Holy Sacrament and its purpose, says :

“To the end we should alway remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST, *thus dying for us*, and the innumerable benefits which by His *precious blood-shedding* He hath obtained to us; He hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of His love, and for a *continual remembrance of His Death*, to our great and endless comfort.”

Persons do not often consider that in neglecting the Holy Sacrament, they are in reality neglecting CHRIST’s Death and Passion.

For they are casting aside that ordinance in which He Himself has commanded us to remember, and to apply, His Death.

Every soul that cares for “CHRIST crucified,” must needs care for CHRIST’s own appointed Memorial of His Passion.

Then next, if the season be fitting for this sacred subject, so would I wish, with God’s help, to treat it in a fitting *manner* : to avoid as far as possible mere controversy, while we tread together the sacred scenes of the Passion, and from our consideration to draw out rather

in the love of our adorable Redeemer all that is *instructive, practical, and devotional* in the doctrine of the Holy Communion.

I would further invite the attendance of all who feel interested in this vital matter, more especially of those whose minds are stirred by the conviction of past neglect, or harassed with any doubts and difficulties as to communion. Come in a prayerful, teachable spirit, as those who wish to know the way of the LORD: and come regularly to the whole course.

Should any still desire additional counsel and instruction, or be oppressed with any special doubt or trial, they will find me in the vestry on the Friday afternoons in Lent from three to four o'clock, ready to speak with them on this, or any matter that concerns their souls.

And now, brethren, as we enter upon this holy subject, let us remember "that the ground whereon we stand is holy ground," and let us draw near with reverence, praying that the HOLY SPIRIT may enlighten and teach us; and that we may receive His teaching into good ground.

So shall the lessons we now learn bring forth abiding fruit, deepening and increasing our value for the Sacrament of His love, and making us to feel and know, by an ever-ripening experience in the hidden depths of our

souls, that "HIS COMMANDMENT is life everlasting."

Now, when we take a survey of the doctrine of the Holy Communion, as it is brought before us in various parts of Scripture, we see at once that it is presented to us under *differing aspects*. I mean, that at one time it is spoken of as a *commandment*, at another as a *memorial* of CHRIST's death, at another as the *partaking* of CHRIST the Living Bread,—the "Communion of the Body," and "the Communion of the Blood" of CHRIST, and so on.

And it will perhaps bring out the subject more clearly, if we take these differing aspects and consider them *separately*, one by one.

I will begin then with THE COMMANDMENT, viewing the Holy Communion to-night as a command of our LORD:¹ "DO THIS."

It is a simple and positive commandment, given by the LORD to His Church, by the Master to His Disciples, by the Redeemer to His redeemed. "DO THIS." Keep this service. Observe this ordinance.

And the Service in our Prayer Book, in one of its exhortations, brings this view forcibly to our remembrance,—sets before us, you will recollect, the receiving of the Holy Sacrament

¹ See note at the end of the Sermon.

as a *direct command* of CHRIST. It says: "As the SON of GOD did vouchsafe to yield up His soul by death upon the Cross for your salvation; so it is your duty to receive the Communion in remembrance of the Sacrifice of His Death, as *He Himself hath commanded.*"

There can be no doubt, there is no mystery here.

Whatever we may think, whatever others may say, however at times we may be perplexed in our own minds, however mysterious some of the statements of Holy Scripture may appear, *this*, at least, is perfectly intelligible, and leaves us, as Christians, no choice in the matter. "Do **THIS**," is our LORD's own plain, unmistakeable word. It is to us an alternative of love or un-love. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words;" "He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings."

It is an alternative of obedience or disobedience, and so far of spiritual life, or spiritual death. For it is written: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

We are inclined sometimes, when we are told the Holy Sacrament is necessary to salvation, to say, "This is a hard saying." Put it in another way, and the truth will appear more plain. Obedience to CHRIST's word is necessary to salvation. "Do **THIS**," is CHRIST's

word. Shall we disobey, and still claim our title to salvation? What saith the Scripture? "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and enter in through the gates, into the City." But "*cursed* are they that do err from Thy commandments."

"Our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread," and ordained the new commandment, and said, "Do **THIS** in remembrance of Me." He was as One giving the last charge to His own, summing up at the last, in one, all His commandments, dying for His disciples, and at His death bidding them, *in a certain way*,—by a Sacrament which He ordained,—keep His death always in remembrance, and apply its benefits to themselves.

And, (for this should not be overlooked,) on *that same night*, in that same Upper Chamber, while actually engaged in appointing this very Ordinance, and enjoining its observance as His commandment, "Do **THIS**;" it was, let us bear in mind, on this very occasion that He spoke those words, the force of which we often miss by losing sight of this connexion: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

Shall we then say, *We* love Him not? And loving Him not, can we lay claim to His love?

Shall we depart, having broken His word all our lives long, and hope "to depart in peace?" And yet such is our position, if we keep not His commandment; if while He says to us, "Do THIS," we do it not.

But we may go still further: the commandment of which we speak has a *peculiar* force; it stands in a *special* relation to us, as members of CHRIST's Church; it has, when we consider thoughtfully all the history and circumstances of its appointment in the Scripture, a meaning, an obligation, of which perhaps we are not fully aware.

Now you will all recollect that the Holy Sacrament was ordained at the time of the Passover.

Our LORD kept the Passover with His disciples, and then instituted the Holy Communion. This Christian Sacrament was henceforth to take the place of the ordinance of the Jewish Passover. It was to be in the Christian, what that had been in the Jewish Church.

The Communion of the Body and Blood of CHRIST was to be the great *distinctive* rite and ordinance of the Christian Church, as the Passover had been of the Jewish. "Ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations: ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever."

And S. Paul, you will remember, makes distinct reference to this, when he says: "CHRIST, *our Passover*, is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast."

I am not concerned now with the Sacrifice, the Memorial, the Feast itself. These subjects will come before us, each in their order, on a separate occasion. I am concerned only with the fact of the ordinance, with THE COMMANDMENT.

And I say that the circumstances we are considering give a great and very *special* force to that commandment.

The Jews, as you will remember, were made partakers of a great deliverance when they were brought out, by a mighty Hand, from the bondage of Egypt. And this great deliverance they were commanded to observe perpetually, in all their generations, by a special ordinance for ever—the Passover.

Just so when CHRIST our LORD wrought out our great Redemption, delivered us from the bondage of Satan, and paid, as the price of our deliverance, His own precious-Blood, He appointed, as *our Passover*, the Holy Sacrament. He commanded all the members of the Christian Church, in all their generations, to observe this Ordinance for ever, and by it to commemorate, yea, to appropriate to themselves, His great

.

Redemption. "Take, eat: this is My Body which is given for you: THIS DO in remembrance of Me."

The inference from this is clear. The Jewish Passover was not only *a* commandment, but *the* commandment, for all Israel.

The Holy Sacrament, in the Christian Church, cannot be less. It is not only *a* commandment, but *the* great commandment of the Law of CHRIST, summing up in itself all the commandments, inasmuch as it memorializes the one great Act of Redemption.

Of this commandment, surely, it may be said, in an especial sense, in the words of S. James: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in this one point, he is guilty of all."

And hence, as you know, among the Israelites, that soul which, not being unavoidably hindered, failed to keep the Passover, was, by God's express command, cut off from the congregation.

Is not the consequence the same in respect of the Christian Passover—the Holy Sacrament? By failing to keep it, we excommunicate ourselves: that is, we cut ourselves off from the Communion of CHRIST's Body.

That soul is cut off from among His people, by its own disobedience, and placed, by its own act no less than by the Divine sentence, outside the Covenant of Promise.

Or, to call to your minds once more the words of the Prayer Book: "Wherefore, most dearly beloved in CHRIST, take ye good heed lest ye, withdrawing yourselves from this holy supper, provoke God's indignation against you."

"If ye love Me, keep My commandments."
"He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings And the word which ye hear, is not Mine, but the FATHER's which sent Me." And what was the Word which they heard, especially on that night when our LORD spoke this? It was: "Do THIS in remembrance of Me."

"He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My saying."

Brethren! non-communicants! have you ever reflected on this description of yourselves?
"He that loveth Me not!"

Will you remain content with such a character? Will you not keep His saying henceforth, that you may love Him?

"He that loveth Me not." To each non-communicant does the LORD seem to whisper, in accents of tender warning, this rebuke.

"He that loveth Me not:" how ungrateful! what peace or consolation shall there be, without loving CHRIST, in this troubled life? what sure hope in the hour of death?

“He that loveth Me not:” how shall he stand before Me? how shall he be loved of My FATHER in the day of My appearing?

“If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”

In conclusion let me notice briefly one or two objections which are frequently made to the keeping of this commandment,—the Holy Sacrament.

(1.) First: a not unfrequent objection is made, or implied, in this form: “I cannot see the good, or the necessity, of it.” This, sifted to the bottom, is really the language of disobedience or unbelief. If the Holy Sacrament is a commandment of CHRIST, it is not for us, by our own private judgment, to disobey it. If CHRIST says it is good and necessary for us, it is not for us to disbelieve Him.

Such an objection shows altogether a wrong frame of mind. Those who make it have great need to pray for more faith and more obedience.

(2.) Another objection is put in this form: “I don’t like undertaking the responsibility involved in receiving the Holy Communion.”

But, in the first place, the responsibility is already undertaken. Nothing can bind you more than the “solemn vow, promise, and profession” made at your Baptism, and renewed

at your Confirmation, already binds you.¹ And next, if you say, as some do, that then it is not good to be baptized at all; if, that is, you shrink from the responsibilities attached to the Christian body, and so keep yourself out of communion with it, see what a position you place yourself in!

You would not like to be told that there is no place for you among the redeemed in heaven. You will not bring yourself to believe or realize *that*. And yet, if you won't share the *responsibilities* of Communion with CHRIST'S Body on earth, what right have you to expect, how can you hope to share its *blessings* in heaven?

The *responsibility* and the *blessing* must needs go together.

(3.) I will notice but one more objection, made sometimes even by serious persons. It takes this form: "I am not worthy—not in a fit state—to keep this commandment." Now if this arise from real humility in the objector, then it is the very proof that he is prepared. A true feeling of our own unworthiness is the best preparation for the Holy Communion.

If you wait till you are worthy, you will never come at all. You feel the burden of your sins, you feel your own weakness, you fear that

¹ See "Thoughts on Holy Communion," by the Rev. W. W. English.

you will fall back to an evil life. Very true: then come to the Altar, that you may find the pardon you need, the strength that shall bear up your soul, the grace that shall keep you from falling back. You will never find all this by staying away, without or *apart* from the means of grace. It is all waiting for you in the Holy Sacrament.

If, on the other hand, you are really not in a fit state—not living as a Christian should—then you judge yourself out of your own mouth. The objection is your own condemnation: don't make it your excuse. Don't think that sin will be excused, because you have refrained from the Communion, or plead your disobedience to CHRIST's Commandment in justification of your evil deeds: or pride yourself on your superior honesty in not going to the Holy Sacrament. It is *direct disobedience* all the same; and that soul must be in evil case that confesses itself forced, by its own life, to disobey CHRIST's Word.

What would be thought of the soldier who disobeyed continually his officer's orders, and then excused himself on the ground that he was not in a fit state to obey them? He would be dismissed the service, as unfit to be a soldier.

And shall not the Christian, who neglects habitually the command of his great Captain,

on the plea that he is unfit, fare likewise? Shall he not be told to depart from Him, as unworthy of His Name, of His Service, of His Presence? "I tell you, I know you not, whence ye are."

Think then, brethren, to-night of **THE COMMANDMENT**. Remember it is **CHRIST** our **LORD** Who has said concerning His Holy Sacrament, "Do **THIS**;" and Who added, on the same night, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

On Sunday next, God willing, we will consider "**THE MEMORIAL**:" the meaning of those words which follow, and in which our English Bible scarcely gives the force of the original—"**IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME**."

NOTE.—I have refrained purposely from entering into the full meaning of the original verb: *ποιεῖν*. My object in the foregoing sermon is to look at the Holy Sacrament simply in the light of a commandment. The *sacrificial* import of the verb, whether granted or denied, is that which certainly agrees best with the idea of the Memorial, and is most in keeping with the whole solemn Scene and Transaction on that night of the Passover.

SERMON II.

THE MEMORIAL BEFORE MAN.

S. LUKE XXII. 19, AND 1 COR. XI. 26.

"This do IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."

"For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do show the LORD's Death, till He come."

WE considered, on Sunday last, THE COMMANDMENT of the Holy Eucharist, according to our LORD's own word, "THIS DO;" which, because it is the Word of CHRIST, demands the obedience of Christians. For the same cause, the neglect of it must involve us in the peril and penalty of direct disobedience to God.

I proceed this evening to consider, further, the *reason* or *purpose* which our LORD Himself has graciously given us for this commandment.

"This do," He said, "IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."

To the direct command He added the high

purpose,—“THE REMEMBRANCE OF ME.” And the words in the original language are stronger still, and give a force and meaning to the purpose, which we may lose sight of in reading only the translation. They run thus: “This do for THE MEMORIAL OF ME.”

The Holy Communion, then, was to be, not only an act of obedience, but also a *memorial* Rite in the Church of CHRIST. It was to be, as we shall see, *the* Memorial of CHRIST both before man and also before God.

For the sake of clearness I will confine myself to-night to the former aspect only,—“THE MEMORIAL BEFORE MAN.”

And first, let us ask, what is involved in this term,—“the Memorial of CHRIST?” To understand this fully we must be careful to bear in mind all those circumstances in the midst of which, as the Scripture tells us, our LORD used the word. Our LORD and His disciples, as I reminded you last Sunday, had just sacrificed and eaten the Passover; that is, they had just kept the Memorial-Rite of the Jewish Church,—“the Sacrifice of the LORD’s Pass-over,”—that special ordinance in which, by Divine appointment, they showed forth, from generation to generation, the great deliverance of Israel, and how the blood of the lamb,

sprinkled upon the doors, had kept the destroyer from "coming in unto their houses to smite them."

Our LORD then proceeds to ordain a *new* rite,—to change the old for a new *Memorial*,—a Christian, instead of a Jewish, Passover.

And we may draw out His action and His words on that eventful night, in the Upper Chamber, thus: "Ye have just kept the Passover of the old Law. Ye have sacrificed the Lamb as the Memorial. Ye have commemorated the deliverance from death on that night in Egypt through the blood of the lamb 'sprinkled upon the houses.'

"Behold now I am the true Paschal Lamb—the Lamb of GOD! I am the Great Sacrifice, the Blood of which shall be sprinkled for the deliverance of the *spiritual* Israel,—the Church of CHRIST. Henceforth it is not the Sacrifice of the Passover-Lamb, but the Sacrifice of ME and of My Death ye are to observe. Henceforth this is to be the Memorial-Rite of the Church of GOD.

"And for the 'Memorial of ME,' Do THIS: Observe, instead of the old Passover, this Holy Sacrament. Let this be henceforth the ordinance for all generations of the spiritual Israel to the end,—this, the commemoration of the true Paschal Lamb, sacrificed for the sins of

the world,—even this Holy Communion which I now institute.

“I am the Lamb slain. This is the Memorial. Offer no more the Passover-lamb in remembrance of the old deliverance. Offer henceforth this Bread and this Cup for ‘**THE MEMORIAL OF ME,**’—*your* Passover, sacrificed ‘for you and for many for the remission of sins.’”

The words, then—the Memorial of **CHRIST**—signify the memorial of the Sacrifice of Himself, Who delivered us from death, as the blood of the lamb saved the Israelite houses of old.

And this you will remember is distinctly referred to in our Prayer Book service, in one of the exhortations where it is said, “As the SON of GOD did vouchsafe to yield up His soul by death upon the Cross for your salvation, so it is your duty to receive the Communion *in remembrance of the Sacrifice of His Death.*”

But further: this same idea of “the Memorial,” which the Passover-type implies, comes out clearly in the words of the Institution of the Holy Sacrament.

I do not, at present, dwell on those important words further than to point out their manifest connexion with the *Sacrifice* of **CHRIST**, the true Lamb of God. “This is My Body which”

(as the original language runs) "is being given," or offered, "for you; this is My Blood which is being shed for you." Our LORD, you will observe, speaks of Himself, at the Institution, as the great Sin-Offering, as having *already* devoted Himself for the Sacrifice, and by that devotion of Himself to death already begun the Sacrifice. The Lamb is already bound upon the Altar, and the great act of Self-oblation or Offering is proceeding.

The Memorial is ordained; in the institution of the Holy Eucharist, to show forth to all generations, — not to repeat, — the sacrifice "offered once for all;" to commemorate it, to bring it to man's remembrance, to present it before the eye, not of the flesh, but of faith, and to apply and hand on and continue, generation after generation, even to the coming of the LORD, in all its spiritual, quickening virtues, the One Same and never-to-be-repeated Sacrifice of CHRIST, which, as the Apostle doth bear witness, not only *was*, but still *is* "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world."

And so we come back to the words of S. Paul in our text: "As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do show the LORD's Death till He come," — ye do present, in the appointed Rite, the Memorial of His Sacrifice.

To this effect are, and this is the meaning of, the words of our Prayer Book in the Prayer of Consecration, where, as you will remember, it is said that CHRIST, "having made (by His One Oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, did institute, and in His Holy Gospel command us to *continue a perpetual memory* (or memorial) of that His precious Death, until His coming again."

But it is time to sum up, and to apply more particularly to our own instruction this branch of our subject.

1. And first, we learn, (what otherwise is liable to be misunderstood,) the meaning of the great writers and divines of our Church when they speak, as they do so frequently, of the Holy Communion as a *Sacrifice*,—as the Sacrifice of the Christian Church.

The word "Sacrifice," observe, is used in *two distinct* senses. In *one* sense it means the slaying of the victim; in the *other*, it means the presenting, as an offering or memorial, the victim that has been slain.

In the first of these senses,—the slaying of the victim,—of course the Holy Communion is not a Sacrifice. CHRIST, our Victim, has been

sacrificed and slain "once for all;" "He dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him."

In the other sense,—the presenting, as a memorial, the victim that has been slain,—the Holy Communion is a Sacrifice. For it is, as we have seen, the presenting or "showing forth," in the appointed Rite, of the Sacrifice of CHRIST's death,—the perpetual memorial to all generations of the One Sacrifice for ever.

In this latter sense (as we shall see more fully on Sunday next), even in Heaven, CHRIST Himself presents the memorials of His own Sacrifice, "entering in," (as it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews,) "with His own Blood into the Holy Place;" "standing," (so the Apostle of the Revelation saw in vision,) "in the midst of the Throne, a Lamb, as it had been slain."

And as He, the great High Priest, commemorates and pleads for ever in Heaven His Precious Death, just so does the Church on earth commemorate and plead it for ever also, as the one never-to-be-repeated Sacrifice, the one only and continual "propitiation for the sins of the whole world."

Perhaps this distinction in the meaning of the term "Sacrifice," and its application to the

Holy Eucharist, is put as clearly as it can be in the words of one of our old divines, Archbishop Bramhall, who, writing on this subject, says: "We acknowledge a Eucharistic Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, a *commemorative Sacrifice*, or a memorial of the Sacrifice of the Cross,"—the Memorial before man,—“and a representative Sacrifice, or a representation of the Passion of CHRIST before His Heavenly FATHER,”—the Memorial before God. Or, to quote a thoughtful, modern writer,¹ (for in a matter of such great importance, and so liable to mis-statement, I prefer using the expressions of holy and learned men rather than my own,) —“The Lamb, slain on the night of the Passover in Egypt,” (says this writer,) “was *the* Passover Lamb, yet every succeeding commemoration was called the *Sacrifice* of the Passover, though but a *commemoration* of it. So our LORD JESUS CHRIST upon the Cross offered a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, yet do we, according to Scripture usage, and the example of our great English Divines, call every succeeding commemoration a Sacrifice likewise,” i.e., in this commemorative and representative sense.

2. Secondly, we learn the all-importance of being communicants, and *why* the Holy

¹ Rev. W. W. English.

Sacrament is said to be necessary to our salvation.

Last Sunday we saw its necessity, as a direct *commandment* of CHRIST. For, as no one could deny that obedience to the positive commandments of CHRIST is necessary to salvation, so can no one be rightly offended at the saying of the Church, that the Holy Sacrament, being as it is a positive command, is necessary to salvation. If the saying of CHRIST Himself is true of *any* of His commandments, it must be true of *this* the last and greatest,—“If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”

But to-day we learn a further lesson. We are permitted to a certain extent to see *why* the Holy Sacrament is thus necessary. Let us put it to ourselves in the following way. Let us draw out into words all that is contained in the refusal or neglect to communicate. “The LORD JESUS CHRIST has died on the Cross for my sins. I know and believe that it is only through His precious Death that I can be saved. He has appointed a special service or Sacrament,—the Sacrament of His Body and Blood,—by means of which I am to commemorate and to take to myself the benefits,—the cleansing and life-giving efficacy,—of that His precious Death.

“It is not man, it is CHRIST Himself Who

has appointed and commanded this means of applying His Death to the saving of my soul. It is not man, it is CHRIST Himself Who has said of His Body and Blood in the Holy Sacrament, 'This is given for you, this is shed for you, for the remission of sins!' Shall I then neglect the *means* CHRIST Himself has appointed, and yet expect the *benefit*? Shall I refuse the divinely ordained *application* of the LORD's Death in the Holy Communion, and yet claim to be saved by that Divine Death?

"Shall I put from me His *Sacrament*, and yet place my hopes in His *Sacrifice*, while He Himself tells me to apply one by the other?"

See then what is involved in neglecting or refusing the Holy Communion.

It is to put from us the benefits—the efficacy to our own souls—of CHRIST's atoning Death, inasmuch as we neglect that commemoration and that application of His Death, which He Himself has appointed by the Sacrament.

See, therefore, *why* the Sacrament is necessary to our salvation,—viz., as applying, by the LORD's own appointment, to our souls that precious Death of CHRIST without which there is no salvation. And so we are prepared to hear such words as those which CHRIST spoke on one occasion: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood,

ye have no life in you :” words severe, almost to harshness, were it not that it was our loving, gentle LORD Himself Who spoke them.

And if they sound harsh to our ears, remember what many said, even of His disciples, when first they heard them : “This is a hard saying : who can hear it?”

And if, further, we feel inclined, tempted to turn from such words as overstrained, again remember what is recorded of many of His disciples at the time they were first spoken : “They went back, and walked no more with Him,”—walked no more with CHRIST : cut themselves off from communion with Him.

Oh, how many and many a soul since that time has done the same! by turning wilfully from the mystery of the Holy Sacrament,—perhaps after having been instructed in, perhaps after having once followed It, perhaps after feeling convinced within that he ought to receive it; how many and many a soul has *gone back from Christ* and walked no more with Him! Yes; and may I not add, how many a soul seeking for CHRIST, it may be earnestly, has lacked yet His Life, His Light, His Divine Image, because as yet he has not received so as to obey “this hard saying?”

3. And once more, we may learn, thirdly, not only the importance and necessity of Com-

munion, but of reverence and true devotion of heart and life in those who do communicate. I don't mean *perfection*, for to make us better is the very purpose of Communion ; but I mean *sincerity*,—the sincere desire and resolve to serve CHRIST, as we have already promised in our Baptism.

We learn this, I say, also from realizing in the Sacrament the Memorial of the Sacrifice of our dear LORD. It is there, at the Altar, in the divinely-ordained Memorial-Rite, if we truly enter into it, that all the history and circumstances of our LORD's Passion flow in upon our souls, at one and the same time humbling and lifting us up,—humbling us to the very dust for the sins that made Him suffer, lifting us up, as in a Feast of Heavenly Joy, at the deliverance, and the propitiation, and the rest, and the peace, and the life, and the joy, which His sufferings have wrought out for us.

There, perpetually, before the eye, not of the flesh, but of our faith, is brought the remembrance of the One great Sin-Offering, offered once for all for the sins of the whole world.

There too we listen to the words, ever and ever repeated at each recurring Celebration, which not man invented, but CHRIST Himself spoke, and man must never add to nor diminish

from,—the very words by which, more than 1800 years ago, our LORD, in the Upper Chamber at Jerusalem, brought home to His disciples' minds all the love and power of His amazing Sacrifice, and whereby, in His own appointed Memorial, His Church from age to age still brings it home to us: "This is My Body which is given for you: this is My Blood which is shed for you."

With what reverence, then, should we approach so great a mystery! What love, what thankfulness, what sincerity should there be in our hearts when we bethink us that we are commemorating this most precious death of CHRIST our LORD!

Oh, let that never come upon us which is spoken of by the Apostle,—by drawing near, with unrepented sin in our hearts, "to crucify the SON of GOD afresh," "to count the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing." Sins, however many, if we truly repent, with our sorrows and cares, we may bring even to the Altar, that they may all be done away in His most Precious Blood. It is sin not repented of, cherished in a hardened, careless, irreverent heart,—it is this, but this only, which does despite to the Sacrifice of CHRIST. Let, then, those words of the Apostle be ever before us in our Communion to stir up our liveliest devotion,

bringing before us all the memory of CHRIST'S Passion: "As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do show the LORD'S Death till He come."

And, bearing this great fact in mind, you will see why thoughtful and earnest men in these latter times have drawn more attention to the Holy Sacrament, made Its celebrations more frequent, placed It forward more as the great central Act of Christian Worship, and surrounded It with many tokens of loving reverence and care,—not, as has sometimes most erroneously been thought, to exalt the mere human priesthood,—but, on the very contrary, because it is the great Memorial-Rite of CHRIST Himself, the setting forth of that One only Sacrifice on which the whole world depends for its salvation from sin. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

But I pause for the present, to carry on, if God permit, your thoughts, on Sunday next, from the Memorial on earth to that in Heaven: from the Memorial of the Sacrifice before man to that which is before God.

SERMON III.

THE MEMORIAL BEFORE GOD.

EXODUS XII. 13, AND HEBREWS IX. 14.

“And when I see the Blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you, to destroy you.”

“How much more shall the Blood of CHRIST, Who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”

THE Holy Communion, as the perpetual Memorial of the One Sacrifice of CHRIST, occupied our thoughts on Sunday evening last.

From the commandment, “Do THIS,” we were led on to the great *purpose* or feature of that Divine ordinance, viz., “the remembrance, or MEMORIAL of CHRIST,”—“Do this in remembrance—for the Memorial—of Me.”

And on inquiring carefully into the Scripture use of the term, “Memorial,” we learned further, that the Holy Sacrament was ordained to

be the great Memorial-Rite of the Christian Church, as the Passover had been of the Jewish ; that is to say, that as the great deliverance of Israel, by the Blood of the Paschal Lamb, was commemorated perpetually, through all their generations, in the Sacrifice of the Passover,—just so, in the Holy Eucharist, as in the commemorative Sacrifice of the Christian Church, is celebrated for ever the perpetual Memorial to all ages of our redemption by the Death of CHRIST, the true Lamb of God.

Henceforth CHRIST is our Passover, sacrificed “once for all,” to be slain no more, but to be presented for ever in holy Memorial before man and before God, as the One only Sacrifice, the one abiding “propitiation, to the end of time, for the sins of the whole world.”

“For,” in the words of S. Paul, “as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do show the LORD’s Death, till He come.”

Last Sunday, as you will recollect, we confined our thoughts for the most part to one aspect only of this Memorial,—the Memorial before Man.

But we cannot read, we cannot study, the Scriptures carefully without perceiving that it is *more* than this,—that in the Holy Communion we not only “show forth the LORD’s

Death" before man, but also present and plead it BEFORE GOD.

It is a "Memorial" also BEFORE HIM.

And this aspect of it I proceed now to consider.

I. First, then, that it is a Memorial before GOD, is in fact contained in the very idea of its being an *act of worship*.

If the Holy Sacrament were only an instructive rite, then we might say that it fulfilled its purpose by reminding man merely of CHRIST'S Sacrifice.

But if we regard it, as we do, as an act of worship,—as an approach to GOD,—if we come to the Altar to plead with GOD the merits of CHRIST'S Death and Passion, in prayer and intercession, for ourselves and for others, then we see clearly and at once that the Memorial of the LORD'S Body and the LORD'S Blood is presented not before man only but before GOD.

We call upon GOD, as it were, to behold His Dear SON, in the Memorials of His Passion, as the Sacrifice for our sins; and "when He seeth the Blood, to pass over us, that the plague may not be upon us to destroy us."

This much, I say, is implied necessarily in our act of worship. For with whom do we plead the merits of the atoning Sacrifice but with GOD, presenting It humbly before Him,

that He may look upon It in mercy as a Token or Memorial, and "remember the Everlasting Covenant which is betwixt God and every 'redeemed' creature." Yea, God bids us so to do, saying by His Prophet, "Put Me in remembrance : let us plead together."

And it is interesting to observe that in our older English Prayer Book, in the time of Edward VI., as well as in what may be called its most modern version—that of the American Church—we find this truth drawn out in so many words,—words taken for the most part from the Liturgies or Services of the Primitive Church, and forming one of the prayers of the Sacramental Office, e. g., the following, which occurs in the Communion Service of that Prayer Book.

"Wherefore, O LORD and Heavenly FATHER, according to the institution of Thy dearly beloved SON, our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, we Thy humble servants, do celebrate and make here before Thy Divine Majesty, with these Thy Holy Gifts, the Memorial which Thy SON hath willed us to make, having in remembrance His Blessed Passion."

So, too, in our present Prayer Book, we call to God's remembrance the Sacrifice of His dear SON, when we beseech Him "to grant that by His Merits and *Death* we and all the whole

Church may obtain remission of sins, and all other benefits of His Passion."

II. But, in the next place, what is thus implied by the act of Worship appears still more clearly from the direct statements of Holy Scripture, especially in those passages which refer, either in the way of type or re-presentation to the Sacrifice of CHRIST.

In the Passover, for instance, "the blood of the lamb," it is said, "shall be to you for a token."

And then GOD adds of Himself: "And when I see the Blood, I will pass over you." So of the Feast as well as the Sacrifice: "Ye shall keep it a Feast *to the Lord*:" as well as a memorial to yourselves.

GOD condescends to be reminded by the Offerings of His Church. He bids us "put Him in remembrance."

Bringing Himself down graciously to the level of our finite ideas, and to our modes of thought and language, He speaks of the Token of the Covenant, as a Token *for Himself* no less than for us.

So, again, on the great Day of Atonement, the blood of the victim was to be sprinkled by the Priest seven times upon the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies: i.e., before the Presence of GOD.

And so of all the appointed sacrifices and offerings of the old law we find the command universally given that they were to be "*before the Lord alway*:" as e.g. in the Book of Numbers, where we read: "Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your Burnt Offerings, and over the Sacrifices of your peace offerings, that they may be to you for a memorial **BEFORE YOUR GOD.**"

And in fact, it is so in all God's recorded dealings with man from the beginning, from the earliest to the latest declarations of His Revealed Will. It seems ever to have been His Divine Order, in all His Dispensations, to draw up our minds within the circle of His mysterious Presence, and to make man feel, in all his acts of Worship, that there is a direct transaction with God, a very communion with Him.

Hence, even in the early patriarchal dispensation, in the days of Noah, God sets His Rainbow in the cloud, and says that *He will look upon it*, and remember His everlasting covenant. The token is **BEFORE HIM**. And, in His last great covenant with man in **CHRIST**, we read particularly that the precious Blood of the great Sacrifice of His dear Son was not only shed on Calvary in the sight of man, but

taken up into the "heavenly places" themselves. For, as it is written, "With His own Blood He entered in once into the Holy Place;" into Heaven itself, "now to appear in the Presence of God for us." Again the token is **BEFORE** God.

And (as a thoughtful writer of late has observed)¹ when Heaven was opened to S. John in vision, and the glories that encompassed the Throne, *these* very tokens appeared *there* delineated clearly before his eye—the tokens of the Covenants with man surrounding the very Presence of God, as it were to "put Him always in remembrance."

"There was a Rainbow," he writes, "round about the Throne."

There was also, when he looked, "in the midst of the Throne a Lamb as it had been slain."

If, then, throughout the Scripture all man's sacrifices and offerings are said to come up before God, and to be presented to Him—"even," of old time, "the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean"—shall we not much rather, and with more acceptance, present **BEFORE** God, in the divinely ordained Sacrament, the memorials of the

¹ See "Memorial before God," by Rev. J. R. West.

Eternal Sacrifice of His own beloved SON, His most blessed Body and Blood?

Shall this not be, more than all, a "token before Him?" Shall He not look *upon them*, above all, and remember the everlasting Covenant, sealed with that most precious Blood?

Or, to come to the very words of our text, if God said of the sacrifices of the old Covenant, "When I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you:" may we not exclaim, with the assurance of the Apostle, "How much more shall the Blood of CHRIST, Who, through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God,"—a Sacrifice sacrificed, once for all, but presented continually BEFORE GOD—by Himself in Heaven, by His Church on earth in His own appointed Memorial Rite;—"How much more shall the Blood of CHRIST purge your conscience from dead works to serve the Living God."

With this view, then, before us, and these passages of Holy Scripture, we shall the better understand the language of many of the great Divines and writers of our Church on this subject, as, e.g., when Mede writes: "This is that which our SAVIOUR said, when He ordained this sacred rite—'This do, in commemoration of

Me.' But this commemoration," he adds, "is to be made to GOD HIS FATHER, and is not a bare remembering, or putting ourselves in mind only, but a putting GOD in mind. For every sacrifice is directed to GOD, and the Oblation therein, whatsoever it be, hath HIM for its object, and not man."

And in like manner the learned Bishop Jeremy Taylor writes : "CHRIST sits in Heaven, a High Priest continually, and offers still the same one perfect Sacrifice. And this also His ministers do on earth : they offer up the same sacrifice to GOD, the Sacrifice of the Cross, by prayers and a commemorating Rite and Re-presentment, according to His Holy Institution."

III. Once more : the remarks last quoted suggest one further thought, which serves not only to confirm, but to illustrate, this our subject—the Memorial BEFORE GOD in the Holy Communion. I mean the *unity* there exists between the worship of GOD in Heaven and on earth. The words of our LORD, in the Divine prayer, "Thy Will be done in earth as it is in Heaven," as they are all-embracing, apply also undoubtedly to the Worship of His Church. Now when we read thoughtfully the Epistle to the Hebrews, and when we consider also those insights which are given us by the Revelation

of S. John into the mysteries of the Heavenly Temple and the Eternal Altar, we cannot fail to learn this much at least : that in the Worship of Heaven, CHRIST "appears in the Presence of GOD for us," *as* "THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN :"
in Himself both our great High Priest and our Propitiation ; presenting ever before the FATHER, in perpetual intercession, in our behalf, the Memorials of His one all-perfect, all-prevailing Sacrifice.

So that, as the Apostle to the Hebrews reminds us, just as the Jewish High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies with the blood of bulls and goats for a memorial, so CHRIST has entered into Heaven itself, with His own Blood, to plead mightily, to plead perpetually with GOD, by its exceeding preciousness, for His Redeemed.

And what He does Himself in heaven, He commands His Church to do on earth. The Sacrifice which He ever pleads before GOD in His own Person, His Church on earth, according to His commandment, in His own appointed Memorial-rite, pleads for ever in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, pleads it also BEFORE GOD. In this one great Central Act then,—the Sacrifice of the Lamb presented continually in holy Memorial,—the Worship of

heaven and the Worship of earth meet together and are one, even as the Church is one. "His Will is done in earth, as it is done in Heaven;" and we are said, (in the Epistle to the Hebrews,) we who are yet on earth, "to be already come," in spiritual Unity, in that one great Central Commemoration, "to Mount Sion, to the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem: to JESUS the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the 'BLOOD OF SPRINKLING' that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Yea, and as the echoes of the Heavenly Temple reach down, and seem to penetrate and pervade our temples here on earth, how wonderfully still is it the same Eucharistic Song we hear,—the same great Act commemorated throughout all the Creation of God, viz., the Sacrifice "of the Lamb that was slain." "They,"—that is the Redeemed before the Lamb,—S. John writes, "sung a new song, saying, 'Thou *wast slain*, and hast redeemed us unto God by Thy Blood.'" And the Angels take up the same in the Adorable Presence. For S. John writes further: "I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the Throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." And what were they saying? what was their adoring Hymn? It was the

same. They too were "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN." And then extending his vision still further, and gathering into it not only the Worship of heaven, but of all the creation, S. John goes on to tell us that he still heard the same Eucharistic Song ascending from the earth, and from the sea, as he had heard in heaven, of the Sacrifice of the Lamb, presented *there* in Person, *here* in figure and in Sacrament,—until the echoes of it seemed to join heaven and earth in one,—in one act of universal Adoration. "And every creature which is *in heaven*, and *on the earth*, and *under the earth*, and such as are in *the sea*, and *all* that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and,"—mark the word,—“unto the LAMB for ever and ever.”

Such then is the Name of JESUS still,—“the LAMB of GOD,” our Propitiation before the FATHER,—whether in the Heavenly Glory, or beneath the veil of earthly Sacraments. And we see with what fulness of Scripture truth, and with what fitness we use the words of the Eucharistic Anthem in our Communion Office: “Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we,”—even we

on earth,—“laud and magnify Thy glorious Name.”

But it is time to draw to a close this branch of our subject. Let me sum up briefly in one or two applications of it to our own instruction and devotion: first, in its external aspect, and then more deeply and inwardly.

1. First then, the comparison with the Heavenly Eucharist on which we have just dwelt, shows us the fitness of *music*, careful, reverent, devotional music, in the Holy Communion.

In days of coldness and carelessness this was neglected. We have grown altogether used to unmusical Celebrations.¹ And by long use even devout and heavenly-minded persons prefer them. But there can be no doubt, as a matter of *fact and reason*, considering that the Holy Eucharist is the Church's highest act of Praise, and the counterpart of the Heavenly Worship, that it is a great incongruity, a sad witness to past carelessness, that having sung God's praises in the earlier and lower acts of our Worship, when we come to the *highest Act* in the Holy Communion, “the special Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, we should then leave out and quench every note of holy music.

¹ I am referring in this passage to the late Celebration.

2. And secondly, what has been advanced concerning the Memorial BEFORE GOD, will explain why in the Service for Holy Communion the Priest stands before the Altar, with his face turned away from the people. It is sometimes said, in ignorance, that he turns his back upon the congregation. But this is to misrepresent the fact. For in the Holy Communion he and they together are engaged in offering BEFORE GOD the Memorial of CHRIST's Passion. The Priest is not speaking *to* the people as in the Sermon or the Lessons, and therefore does not face them. He is speaking to God *for* them and *with* them; offering BEFORE GOD, with them, the great Memorial. And so all face naturally the same way, looking Eastward to the Source of Light; the Priest in front at the Altar, not by virtue of any pre-eminence of his own, but simply as CHRIST's Ambassador, "making known their requests UNTO GOD," pleading and presenting *for* them, BEFORE GOD, the one only Sacrifice of reconciliation.

3. Thirdly: To pass from the outward to the inward.

We learn further from the fact on which we have been dwelling, viz., that it is CHRIST's Sacrifice for the sins of the world which we commemorate in Holy Communion; we learn, I say, from this fact, how grievous a mistake it

is to imagine that it is only those who are *perfect* who are invited to the Holy Sacrament.

The greatest sinners, if they are truly penitent, and stedfastly purposed to lead a new life may come, that their sins may be washed away in the precious Blood. For what is it that is commemorated and pleaded at the Altar? It is this very thing, the Sacrifice of Him "*Who taketh away the sins of the world,*" the very Atonement for sin.

And this we are assured of in the Service itself. For among the comfortable words spoken to us from the Altar are these: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that CHRIST JESUS came into the world to *save sinners.*" And again, these: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the FATHER, JESUS CHRIST the Righteous; and He *is the propitiation for our sins.*"

4. Fourthly, and lastly. We learn from the same fact, that the Altar is the true Centre of Unity for all believers. For what, except the Sacrifice of CHRIST *for all*, can bind *all* in *one*? "I, IF I BE LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME."

This is the great Central Bond which unites, as we have seen, the praises of heaven and earth. This, by its all-embracing efficacy, knits together in mystical fellowship all the

members of the one Body of CHRIST,—the Church,—the far and the near, the faithful living and the faithful dead. And we cannot wonder therefore that it was on the very night of the Institution of this Sacrament, that our LORD, having already devoted Himself for the Sacrifice, offered up His great intercession to the FATHER for those that should believe on Him, “that *they all* might be *one*.” Hence, too, we see why the Saints of God, in all times and countries, have ever chosen the Altar as the most sacred Spot for their intercessions in behalf of others as well as of themselves; where, remembering and pleading before God the all-Redeeming Sacrifice, they have ever loved to make mention in their prayers of friends and loved ones, of the sinful and sorrowful, of enemies and persecutors, and of all that are scattered and severed from them, whose faces they see not in the flesh, but with whom they know they are together at the Altar. For what plea, what Memorial can avail with God for their souls as that plea which is contained in the Eucharistic Chant to the Lamb: “Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by Thy Blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation?”

Thus far then for the Memorial of CHRIST

before man and before God in the Holy Communion. Out of this arises naturally the important question, what part does CHRIST Himself fulfil,—what is the nature of His own Presence in that Memorial-rite? And this, as far as we may know it, we will consider, if God will, on Sunday next.

SERMON IV.

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST.

S. MATTH. XXVI. 26, AND 1 COR. XV. 44.

"THIS IS MY BODY."

"There is a natural Body, and there is a spiritual Body."

IF, as in the foregoing lectures I have endeavoured to show, the Holy Communion is the special Memorial-rite of the Christian Church, the one form of Service ordained by CHRIST Himself, we should naturally expect that it would be blessed by a special PRESENCE of CHRIST.

The unbeliever indeed may reject altogether the notion of *any* Presence whatever of CHRIST with His Church. But the Christian who thinks upon, or who attaches any meaning at all to such words of his LORD as these: "Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world," cannot disbelieve the fact itself of

CHRIST's continual Presence with His Church on earth.

And if he really holds this fact, that CHRIST is present, he will see, further, (to say the least,) the *reasonableness* of supposing, that in His own special Ordinance, that promised Presence would be specially vouchsafed. And another thing he will see; if this Presence of CHRIST is promised by His own Word, it must be a *reality*.

We cannot accuse our LORD of deceiving us by a vain empty promise. And therefore he will have no difficulty whatever in accepting, in its true sense, (which we shall consider as we go on,) the reality of CHRIST's Presence, or as it is called, the Doctrine of the REAL PRESENCE in the Holy Communion.

Let us turn then to this important question, and, as before, let us search the Scriptures on the point, to see whether what we have allowed to be reasonable and probable is really borne out by the direct statements and teaching of the Bible.

1. And first, it will clear our path, if we bear in mind, if we carry with us through all our investigation, this thought: that we are dealing with a *mystery* of Faith. I mean with one of those many truths of the Christian Re-

ligion, which we accept by faith, without being able fully to understand or to explain them.

The Christian Revelation is full of such mysteries. This truth,—the Presence of CHRIST, is no more a mystery than many other truths, such as the Incarnation itself, the Indwelling of the HOLY GHOST, the Resurrection of the Body, and many others.

Its being a mystery therefore is no objection to its truth, unless we are prepared to give up all mysteries, all that passes our understanding. It is rather in keeping with the general analogy of the whole Christian Revelation.

But it is important to remember that *it is a mystery*, and that for two reasons; *first*, that we may seek after that proper frame of mind, that humility and that faith which alone is able to accept the blessed fact itself; even like her who, pondering the great central Mystery of the Incarnation, said, "How shall this be?" but added, "Behold the handmaid of the LORD, be it unto me according to thy Word."

And then for this second reason: that we may not attempt to describe exactly the *manner* of the mystery, that is, *how* the fact of CHRIST's Presence takes place. For if it is a mystery beyond human understanding, it is a mystery, remember, necessarily beyond exact human definition.

Hence that unhappy doctrine, as popularly received, called "Transubstantiation." It had its origin in an attempt to define in human terms the mysterious and the undefinable. And it broke down naturally, and led to error.

When the people at Capernaum, as you will remember, said: "How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?" our LORD made a remarkable reply. He said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit* and they are life."

By which He meant, not, (as is sometimes thought,) "My words are only figurative and unreal," but they are to be taken in a *heavenly, supernatural, spiritual* sense, not in any carnal, gross, earthly sense.

They are real, but with a mysterious reality, —of "the spirit and of the life,"—too great for any carnal notion or description. Or, to quote a thoughtful writer on this point.¹ He writes: "All the sayings of the Son of God concerning the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood, still remain in all their perfect precision, in all their heavenly truth, in all their absolute certainty, in all their tremendous greatness: only they are to be removed from the interpretations of mere natural sense and reason, and shown to belong to a supernatural

¹ See Treatise on the Holy Eucharist, by Rev. J. R. West, pp. 69, 70.

Mystery, relating to the powers of the ascended, glorified Body of the SON of GOD."

Thus, when our LORD uses in the text the solemn words, "This is My Body," we are to seek their true explanation in that corresponding Mystery of which the Apostle reminds us: "There is a natural Body, and there is A SPIRITUAL BODY."

2. And now let us go on, as I have said, to the direct teaching of Holy Scripture, which we may look at in *two* ways: (1) first, as to the fact or reality of the Divine Presence *generally*; and (2) secondly, as to what the Scripture reveals concerning that PRESENCE, particularly in the Christian Church, and in the HOLY SACRAMENT.

Remember that a Real Presence does not necessarily mean a fleshly, earthly one. Remember too that what is heavenly, spiritual, supernatural, is just as *real*, yea, a far greater reality than what is only fleshly and earthly; even as the Spirit is more real than the flesh, and Heaven is more real than earth.

And so the Apostle in our text, you will observe, speaks of *two* distinct realities, the one natural, and the other spiritual, both equally real,—“There is a natural Body, and there is a spiritual Body.”

(1.) But first, as to the fact or reality of the Divine Presence generally.

Throughout the whole of Scripture, along the whole line of God's revealed dealings with His people, and in all dispensations, the Presence of God has, under some outward form or other, been always signified and communicated to His Church.

In Paradise there was the Tree of Life, with its immortal, life-giving fruit, a perpetual witness and communication to man of that life which was alone in God, and a pledge and means of that Presence of the Living God, Who "walked in the garden in the cool of the day."

In the early patriarchal times, we find the same great truth manifested and conveyed by means chiefly of Angelic Forms; as when Jacob in his vision "awaked out of his sleep, and said, Surely the LORD is in this place."

To Moses again a special assurance was vouchsafed in the bush, burning and not consumed,—a token of the LORD's Presence, "at which Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God;" and which was followed by the very promise, "Certainly I will be *with thee*."

Then, along the journeyings of Israel in the wilderness, what again was the meaning of

“the pillar of the cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night?” Surely it was the token of the Everlasting Presence, as Moses declares: “What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?”

And, as we pass on to the later history of the Jewish Church and its settled state in Canaan, with its fixed, divinely appointed ordinances, what a special and wonderful provision was made for the perpetual maintenance of the Divine Presence all along that dispensation,—in the Sacred Ark of the Covenant, that holy Symbol of God “among them,” which went in and out before them, without which God departed from them; with its Mercy-seat for propitiation; with its sacredness so great that a careless handling of it brought, as we remember, death to the guilty, as an act of irreverence towards God Himself; with the shadows of the Divine glory so manifestly hanging around the outward Symbol, that, as we read, at the dedication of the Temple, when “the priests brought in the Ark of the LORD,” the “cloud” of the mysterious “Presence” filled the House of the LORD, “so that they could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD had filled the House of the LORD:” and, further, with that enshrined Presence, so truly,

so certainly, so *really* present, that David, at the removing and carrying up of the Ark seems almost to forget the visible Symbol in the invisible Reality; and, as it is lifted up, to address God Himself, saying, in the well-known Psalm: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered." And again: "It is well seen, O God, how Thou goest: how Thou, my God and King, goest in the sanctuary."

The history of the Sacred Ark of the Covenant to those who are interested in the subject, is a wonderful proof of that universal law of God's dealings with His Church, viz., the enshrining in, and communicating by a special outward Symbol or Sacrament, His inward invisible, but most real and life-giving Presence.

(2.) And this brings me naturally to the second point or view I mentioned, the teaching of Holy Scripture on this subject in reference more particularly to the Christian Dispensation and its distinctive Rite,—the Holy Sacrament.

And, of course, we see at once, that if in the earlier and imperfect dispensations of God, when God had not yet been "manifest in the flesh," He was pleased so graciously to vouch-

safe His Presence to man,—how much more He would be likely to do so in the more perfect Christian Covenant, and when, by virtue of the Incarnation, man had been reconciled and united to God as he had never been before.

Was there an ark of the Presence among Israel of old? And would there be no ark of the Presence for the Christian Church? no corresponding Symbol and assurance of that all-precious Reality for Christians,—for those purchased by the Blood of God's dear SON, and actually made members of CHRIST, in the Church of "Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, GOD WITH US?"

And then, it would appear likely further, that as the Incarnation was the true ground of the union of God with man, so the continued Presence of CHRIST with His Church would, in some way, be connected with that great fundamental Mystery.

And so we find from the Scripture that it is.

The Holy Sacrament is the Symbol,—the special ark of the Presence. "THIS IS MY BODY."

And our LORD by saying, not, 'This is Myself' merely, but "THIS IS MY BODY AND MY BLOOD," you will observe, fixes our minds at once on the Incarnation, on His spotless perfected *Human Nature*, on His "being God

manifest in *the flesh*;" as if, henceforth in the Church, His Presence, with all its cleansing, life-giving, supernatural virtues, was to be connected, however mysteriously, in the Holy Sacrament, with His sinless, perfect, spiritual Humanity.

Being now for ever God and Man in one Person, His Presence in the Church would be of necessity the Presence of the God-Man.

And here S. Paul's words come in to explain. "There is a natural Body, and there is a spiritual Body." So when it is said CHRIST is present, in His perfected Human Nature, it is not meant with His Natural Body, but with the *Spiritual*,—with that spiritual, glorified Humanity which, after the Resurrection, appeared and vanished again and passed through closed doors, not being subject to any of the ordinary conditions of time, and space, and matter.

These words of the Apostle are very instructive and very important. The distinction he lays down so clearly between the Natural and the Spiritual Body is calculated to set at rest many of our difficulties respecting the Sacramental Presence.

There is a great difficulty in our LORD's solemn words, "This is My Body," if we do

not remember that there is "a Spiritual Body" as well as "a Natural."

But, remembering this, there is no need to be afraid, as some seem to be, of the blessed words, in their plain grammatical meaning.

They do not mean, "This is My Body," in a gross carnal sense.

"There is a Spiritual Body:" and they do mean, "This is My Body" in that spiritual and heavenly reality, in the powers and properties of that glorified, spiritual Body of which the Apostle speaks, and which he says is a real though mysterious existence, as truly so as the Natural Body. "There is a Natural Body, and there is a Spiritual Body."

With this we must be content. "The Spiritual Body" is a real existence, a Real Presence; that is all we know. What it is in *itself*—its powers, properties, conditions—we know not. Define it further, we cannot. Let us be thankful for the Reality—for this most blessed assurance of the True Presence of our Incarnate LORD in His Holy Sacrament.

And as, on the one hand, we define not further what it is, so let us be equally careful not to seek to define what it is not,—not to say, with some, that our LORD's words are a mere figure of speech, and to explain them

away, as if, when He said "This is My Body" He meant "This is *not* My Body."

To quote the Homily of our Church on this subject, — "Neither need we to think," the Homily says, "that such exact knowledge is required of every man, that he be able to discuss all high points in the doctrine thereof; but thus much we must be sure to hold,—that in the Supper of the LORD there is no vain ceremony, no bare sign, no *untrue* figure of a *thing absent*."

But one brief and striking illustration, (and that too out of the Holy Scripture,) and I will close this portion of our subject.

On the way from Jerusalem to Emmaus, when the Risen LORD had put on the "Spiritual Body," with all its mysterious powers, He walked by the side of two disciples, and they knew Him not. They were unconscious of the Reality of His Presence. He talked to them by the way, but they discerned not His Presence. He opened to them the Scriptures, but His Presence was still undiscerned,—unrealized.

You know what followed,—you know "*how* He was known of them,"—how the Real Presence of the Incarnate and Glorified LORD, in the powers of His Spiritual Body, was mani-

feasted to them. He, Who had talked with them, He Who had expounded to them the Scriptures, proceeded to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. "It came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took Bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and *they knew Him*; and He vanished out of their sight."

His Presence was manifested. "He was known of them in the breaking of Bread."

O mysterious, and blessed, and most Holy Sacrament! O true Ark of the Church of JESUS! Thou didst enshrine the true, the all-desired, the Adorable Presence! The two disciples touched Thee, and Thou didst open Thy treasure and reveal to them what, in other ways and means, they had failed to see,—their Incarnate LORD, risen and glorified, verily present with them!

Oh, blessed words! how really and spiritually true,—"**THIS IS MY BODY!**"

And still these words abide. And still the Holy Sacrament, the Spiritual Ark, is with us. And is It found empty? Is there no True Presence enshrined now because years and ages have rolled away? Nay, God forbid, for time changes not the Everlasting Presence. The "Spiritual Body" cannot die.

And as we lift up the Ark of our Covenant,

and look, reverently and humbly, to the Sacrament of our redemption, we see still inscribed upon that holy Mystery, in words that cannot fail the Everlasting Promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world!"

To sum up very briefly with one or two practical applications.

(1.) First, we learn from these considerations what is the true meaning of—in what light we are to regard—that which is called "the Prayer of Consecration" in the Communion Service. According to the teaching of the Church it is by the due act of Consecration that the Elements of Bread and Wine, still continuing Bread and Wine, are made very vehicles and channels of the Spiritual Presence, so as to become, after a heavenly and spiritual manner, "the Body and Blood of CHRIST."

This, observe, arises not from any power of the consecrating Priest, inherent in himself; the power is simply and entirely of CHRIST. The Priest is merely the agent and minister of CHRIST, just as, to take a parallel instance, when a sinner is convinced by a sermon, the Word may have been spoken by the Priest, but the power which convinces and converts is entirely the power of CHRIST.

Therefore, in the Prayer of Consecration,

the Priest simply pronounces the very words of CHRIST Himself,—“This is My Body: This is My Blood,”—but no words of his own.

And after the Consecration, as has been observed by one of our eminent English divines, “The elements are called in the Service no more by the name of their bodily substance, but of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, which they are become.” Such are the words of Thorndike.

And so, in the communicating, it is said, “The Body of CHRIST,”—“The Blood of CHRIST,”—“preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.”

I point this out because, unless we accept this teaching of the Church, the “Prayer of Consecration” is nothing but a solemn mockery. And the reasonableness of such teaching is, I think, clear from the Scriptural facts we have considered, that the Holy Sacrament is, by CHRIST’s appointment, the Ark or symbol of His True Spiritual Presence. It is so, moreover, by CHRIST’s Power, according to CHRIST’s Ordinance; neither by the power of the Priest, nor by the Faith of the receiver only. It is so, independently of all human power, or faith, or influence, by the Word of CHRIST Himself.

(2.) Secondly, if this be indeed the gracious Word and Promise of CHRIST to His Church, it is strange that Christians should so often shrink from accepting it. The Real Presence is indeed still a Mystery. But so is *every* act and *every* working of the grace of God along the whole line of His dealings with man. We are assured of the blessed Reality, but we know nothing of the *method* of its operations. "Thou hearest the sound thereof,"—thou knowest it is a fact,—but "thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth."

Rather, therefore, should we confess our unworthiness and our incapacity to grasp it, not refuse to acknowledge the Blessed Gift Itself. Ah! it is our sins that make us shrink, as Adam did, from the thought of the Presence of the LORD. But HE walketh nevertheless still as of old, in the midst of the garden of His Church, by the side of the River of Living Water, and by the Tree of Life with its immortal Food. Increase in holiness, increase in purity, and what you now shrink from shall become your one most precious consolation in life, your great stay in death, and the very beginning here on earth of the risen and glorified Body of your Resurrection. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The subject of the "Communion" on Sunday

next, if God permit, will carry on and apply the subject of the Presence of CHRIST.

We shall learn that the Reality is not only a living one, but, by imparting its life to us, is *Life-giving* also ; that JESUS not only says, " I am the Living Bread," but also, " He that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever."

SERMON V.

THE COMMUNION.

S. JOHN VI. 51, AND 1 COR. X. 16.

"I am the Living Bread, which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever ; and the Bread that I will give is MY FLESH, which I will give for the life of the world."

"The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the COMMUNION OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST? The Bread which we break, is it not the COMMUNION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST?"

THERE are, speaking generally, two chief aspects of the doctrine of the Holy Communion, corresponding to the two great parts of the ancient Passover—the Sacrifice and the Feast.

You will remember that, in the Jewish rite, the Passover Lamb was first sacrificed to God, and then partaken of by the people.

There was the Offering, and then the Participation. Precisely similar is the twofold order of the great Christian Rite, the Holy Sacrament.

Therein, first, the Church offers to God the one only Sacrifice of the true Paschal Lamb :

And then, next, partakes, in mystery, of the Heavenly Sacrifice, feasts upon It, draws from It spiritual life and sustenance.

There, too, is both the Offering and the Participation, the Sacrifice and the Feast. "CHRIST our Passover is *sacrificed* for us, therefore let us keep the *Feast*."

In other words, that which is the Memorial before God and man of the precious Death of CHRIST, becomes also, by virtue of His Living Presence, the COMMUNION, or communication, of His Life to the faithful partaker.

This, then, is our subject to-night. This is what is meant by the Communion, or Communion of CHRIST in the Holy Sacrament.

"The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion," as the original word signifies, "the *Participation* of the Body of CHRIST?"

And, in our LORD's own solemn words, which connect the Holy Communion with the life-giving virtues of His own spiritual and glorified Humanity: "The Bread which I will give is MY FLESH, which I will give for the life of the world."

Let us proceed to consider this Communion,

or Participation, of CHRIST—the imparting to us, sacramentally, of our LORD's perfect Human Nature, until, as He said, "Because He lives we shall live also."

I. And first: here, as before, let me observe there is *mystery*—that which passes our understanding. There is no greater mistake than to believe or accept nothing but that which we can understand, seeing that our understandings are, by nature, so very finite and imperfect. On this principle we could not believe Christianity itself; we could not be, in a true sense, Christians: because the *whole* Revelation of CHRIST, from the Incarnation onward, is a *mystery*.

When persons say concerning the Holy Sacrament, as they often do, "I can believe in the Ordinance so far as it is a taking of bread and wine in remembrance of CHRIST, but I cannot believe in the Real Presence of the Spiritual Body, or in the Communicating of CHRIST's Nature through the bread and wine:" what do such persons, really and in effect, say? simply this—that they believe as far as they see, and no further.

And they forget that this way of arguing would be destructive of *all faith*, properly so called.

None of the great doctrines of the Gospel

would be properly and fully believed if we demanded first to understand them, if we ceased to believe at the point where mystery began.

Indeed it is to be feared, as thoughtful men have said, that the real reason why there is so much disbelief of Sacramental Grace, so much reluctance to believe the mystery of CHRIST'S Presence is this—the wide-spread spirit of practical unbelief altogether in the great mysteries of the Christian Faith. Men do not realize and grasp, with any firm, practical hold, the Divine, supernatural, character of the whole Christian Revelation, as unfolded in the Bible.

We must go back, then, to the very foundations of the Faith, and the very words of CHRIST Himself, if we would view aright either the character of the Christian Scheme as a whole, or the place and purpose of Sacraments in that scheme.

II. Let us go on, secondly, "walking by faith," as Christians should, "not by sight," to consider our LORD'S own direct teaching in the Gospel on the subject before us.

In the sixth chapter of S. John He speaks very fully and explicitly, of Sacramental Communion, or Participation, of Himself as the

True Source and Sustenance of spiritual life in His members. "Verily, verily, I say unto you : except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, *ye have no life in you.*"

The question of the unbelieving Jews, to which these words were the reply, was that, you will remember, which is too often put by unbelieving Christians now ; "*How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?*" Our LORD replied, that, mysterious as it might be, this partaking of Him was necessary to the spiritual life. *Without it* there "was no life in us."

And there are two things observable in His Teaching in this passage. (1.) First : to correct the mere carnal notions of the Jews, He says : "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life : " that is, " when I speak of partaking of My Flesh and Blood, I am speaking indeed of My *Human Nature*, in which My members must participate, and yet of that Nature, not in its gross, earthly, mortal form, but as made spiritual and living and incorruptible, the risen, ascended, perfected Humanity of the Son of Man."

And (2) secondly : our LORD insists (and this cannot, brethren, be too strongly pressed on our attention) on the absolute necessity of this Sacramental Participation of Himself, of His Flesh and Blood, His Human Nature, in this

heavenly sense. It is not enough merely to believe, we must *partake of*, CHRIST—of His Spiritual Nature.

Or rather, our faith is no true faith if it does not lead us to seek CHRIST, as He commands; to draw our own spiritual life from the Fountain He has opened for us in His own perfect Humanity: to derive life and strength for our own spiritual being by the Communication of His, in the Divinely appointed Channel of "His Flesh and Blood."

Mark the words which follow those already quoted. "Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

What can these words mean, but that that immortal, incorruptible nature, which we shall put on at the last day, is formed or created in us by our partaking of CHRIST's perfect Human Nature? And our LORD, you will observe, says, "*hath* eternal life," hath it already begun: it is a living process, ever going on until the perfect Day; the nature of the Christian, by the communication, through the Sacrament, of the Nature of CHRIST, being "changed gradually into the same Image," prepared for that Resurrection State in which our humanity will be like His; when, as the end of all our Sacramental Participation of His Nature, "Our vile

body shall be fashioned like unto His Glorious Body, according to His mighty power."

The celebrated Hooker, one of the greatest of English Divines, in his work on the Ecclesiastical Polity, uses in one passage these remarkable words: "Doth any one doubt but that even from the Flesh of CHRIST our very bodies do receive that Life, which shall make them glorious at the latter day, and for which they are already accounted parts of His Blessed Body?"

"How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?" Not in a gross, carnal sense. How then can He impart to us His Spiritual and Glorified Human Nature, so that we are made verily partakers of it?

How we know not: that He does so we are sure, for He has told us Himself. Yea, not only has He told us that He does, but in the Holy Communion He has appointed a special "means whereby we may receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." To all our faithless, curious questionings, then, the reply must be sufficient: "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" "Hath He said, and shall He not do it?"

S. Thomas saw, with the very eye, the risen, glorified Body of the LORD, and believed. We see it not with the eye of the flesh. We

gaze on it, we take it to ourselves, *in faith*, under the veil of Mystery and Sacrament, as yet not seeing, but believing. And we know Him that hath said: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

III. But further: though all this be a mystery, yet we are permitted, to a certain extent, to see the reasonableness of it.

Our LORD, you know, is called "the Second Adam," the new Head of our redeemed race. And as we derive, or inherit, from the first Adam, our sinful, fallen nature; so it is only reasonable that our renewed, spiritual, regenerate nature, "that which shall be made glorious" hereafter, should be, in like manner, derived from, and communicated by, our participation in the sinless Nature of the Second Adam. In fact, this is implied by S. Paul when he says: "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly."

And still more when he adds: "The last Adam was made a quickening," i.e., a life-giving "Spirit."

"The first man, Adam, was made a living soul." He derived life from God, and it was transmitted only, through him, to his posterity.

But the "last Adam" was more. He was not only a Living, but a *Lifegiving*, Spirit. He had "Life in Himself;" and that Life He could give, or communicate from Himself, so as to make men, by that communication, "partakers of the Divine Nature.

"For as the FATHER raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them: even so the SON quickeneth whom He will."

And this, be it observed, falls in with what is said throughout the New Testament concerning the whole method of our Regeneration, the way in which man is created anew unto righteousness in CHRIST JESUS.

This is always spoken of as a change of nature, a "putting off the old man," or nature, "and a putting on of the new;" a being transformed from the image of the First Adam into that of the Second. "As in Adam all die"—all inherit a sinful, mortal nature—"so in CHRIST shall all be made alive:" partakers of a living, spiritual, incorruptible nature.

So in like manner we are said to be in CHRIST, and CHRIST in us; to be made one with CHRIST; to have CHRIST "formed in us;" to be fashioned "like unto His Glorious Body," and before "we can see Him as He is," "to be made like unto Him," i.e., to have our whole

nature changed and renewed from its sinful type in Adam, to its spiritual and heavenly type in CHRIST.

And this, mysterious though it be, is effected in us by Sacramental union with CHRIST: by a true and real and spiritual participation in His perfect, glorified Humanity: communicated to us, as it can only be now, sacramentally.

Bearing all this in mind, we seem to see more clearly, to gather quite a new and more satisfactory insight into the real nature and purpose of Sacraments. They are no more bare signs or forms, but Divine means specially ordained to work out our Regeneration.

We are baptized into CHRIST, that we may be connected with or joined to the Second Adam, and so may share the quickening virtue of His Life in us.

And we partake of the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood, really but spiritually communicated to us, that His Holy Humanity may be imparted to us, and the new nature, begun in Baptism, may thus grow more and more into the very Nature of CHRIST in us.

“He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him.”

“The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion, the Participation, of the Body of

CHRIST? The Cup which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of CHRIST?"

So that, in a word, our Regeneration to holiness consists in our being made partakers of the nature of CHRIST, which we derive from Him, the Second Adam; and the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood is the Divinely-appointed means of that participation.

"I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: and the Bread which I will give is MY FLESH, which I will give for the life of the world."

To quote once more the words of Hooker,—
"That which quickeneth us is the Spirit of the Second Adam; and HIS FLESH—that wherewith He quickeneth."

"How can these things be?" Again and again this question rises up in our minds—the very question which men put of old to our LORD Himself when He first opened out His Sacramental System,—when He taught for the first time to Nicodemus the Mystery of Baptism, and to the Jews at Capernaum, the Mystery of Communion.

"How can these things be?" But one answer can be returned. There are mysteries in the Divine Life which, as yet, we are not

competent to understand. Let us beware how we reject or disregard them, simply because we understand them not.

You know the record of old,—the impression made upon those who first heard our Lord's teaching as to the Mystery of His Body and Blood. "Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this, said, This is an hard saying, who can hear it?"

And because they would not accept that Teaching, as being mysterious, what followed? "From that time,"—mark the sad consequence,—"they went back, and walked no more with Him." Let us take heed that we be not partakers with them.

A thoughtful writer has remarked on the similarity in this matter between Nature and Grace—between the operation of the natural and the spiritual food.

He observes, "By eating and drinking proper food every day, we find that our bodily life is preserved in proper vigour. And yet we do not ourselves know *how* this effect is produced. So it is with respect to our Eternal Life. The particular manner in which the Divine Food, given us in the Sacrament, operates within the very substance of our being we know not. It is enough that we hear and believe our SAVIOUR's words, and that, depending upon their

absolute truth, we seek continually for this Bread of Life in the way that He has ordained. So shall we obtain the real preservation of our eternal life, although, it may be, by *insensible* degrees.”¹

But it is time to sum up, and that briefly. I will close with two practical remarks on what has been said to-night.

(1.) First, it follows clearly from this view of our subject that the Holy Sacrament is not to be regarded in the light of a mere sign or remembrance of CHRIST.

We must raise our thoughts of It. It is a divinely-ordained means of our sanctification, for the imparting to us that new Nature of the Second Adam, in which alone we can appear in the Presence of God hereafter. To this effect is the language of our Communion Office, as, e. g., when we pray, “Grant us so to eat the Flesh of Thy Dear SON JESUS CHRIST, and to drink His Blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious Blood.”

And again in the exhortation, “Then we spiritually eat the Flesh of CHRIST, and drink His Blood; then we dwell in CHRIST, and

¹ See *Treatise on the Holy Eucharist*, by Rev. J. R. West, pp. 111, 112.

CHRIST in us, we are one with CHRIST, and CHRIST with us."

And it becomes therefore a most serious consideration whether the wilful neglect of Sacramental Communion will not be found, at the last, to have left our sinful nature unrenewed, and so unfit for the Heavenly Kingdom, and "our vile body" then incapable of "being fashioned like unto the glorious Body" of our LORD.

(2.) And secondly, if it should seem to any that this is to assign too high a purpose to the Sacrament,—that the simple forms of Bread and Wine, which are the outward Elements, do not suggest to us any such high, mysterious Gift,—it must be borne in mind that, as a rule, the Divine Presence and Power has always been conveyed through the very humblest signs, as if for the very purpose of exercising our faith.

If the LORD is pleased to veil Himself under the simple forms of Bread and Wine (still continuing Bread and Wine,) and to communicate thereby the Life-giving virtue of His Divine Humanity, it is only in keeping with, and not a whit more marvellous than, the Mystery of Bethlehem itself, wherein the LORD GOD Incarnate, Maker of Heaven and earth, veiled Himself beneath the lowly form of a helpless

infant lying in a manger. To the faith of that day it was as great a trial to discern the Real Presence of God under the form of the little human Child, as it is now to discern It under the form of the simple Elements of Bread and Wine. Both then and now the spirit which embraced the truth was that which cried, "Be it unto me according to Thy Word."

"Verily," saith the Prophet, "Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." Thy Presence, for the trying of our faith, has ever chosen the simplest, lowliest forms for its communications,—the "little stream," and the "still small voice," and "the Water and the Blood." Thou didst say, of old, of the poor Babe in the stable at Bethlehem, "This is the SON of the Highest!" Thou dost say now of the simple Bread and Wine, "This is My Body and My Blood."

And some doubt, and some mock, and a few believe, and believing, draw closer and closer to their Incarnate LORD, and in Him find Life Eternal. For so it has been since the day when, (as we shall soon commemorate again,) the multitude doubted, and the Scribes and Pharisees mocked, while only the little company of the Faithful, gathering round the Altar of the Cross, drawing closer and closer to each other and their LORD, discerned verily their

LORD and their **GOD** in the Form of the crucified **JESUS**.

Here then let us pause. What our preparation should be for so great and yet so blessed a **Mystery**—for the “true discerning of the **LORD**’s **Body** ;” this will occupy our thoughts, God willing, in the lecture of next Sunday.

SERMON VI.

THE PREPARATION.

S. MATTH. XXVI. 18, 19.

"The Master saith: My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with My Disciples.
"And the Disciples did as JESUS had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover."

OUR subject begins to close in, fitly,¹ with the closing days of our Redeemer's Life, "Whose time is even now at hand."

We pass on from the nature and doctrine of the Holy Communion to the more personal question of our own preparation for it, as the true end of all we have learned.

JESUS is proceeding to the Paschal Supper before He suffers. He has finished all His sayings concerning the Mystery of "the Flesh and Blood of the Son of Man." And now He

¹ Preached on Palm Sunday.

bids His Disciples "make ready the Passover." The Teaching is over,—the time of the actual Participation is come. "Go," He saith, "and *prepare* us the Passover that we may eat."

Meanwhile He is preparing the new Passover,—the great Christian Sacrament, in order that His Disciples, having been taught the Mystery at Capernaum, may now in the Upper Chamber be admitted to the actual partaking.

He passes from doctrine, teaching, explanation, to Holy Communion itself.

It is no more, "the Bread that I *will* give is My Flesh which I will give for the life of the world." But "*the hour is come*," that the Sacrifice of the Lamb of God should be offered up. The Feast itself of the new Passover is being prepared. And He now says, "*Take eat, this is My Body.*"

To His Church, as at this time, His command goes forth, "Make ready the Passover." Cease from the mere hearing and learning of the Sacramental Mystery. Prepare for the actual participation of the Heavenly Feast,—the Body and Blood of the Son of Man.

The teaching of Lent is closing in. Make ready the Easter Communion. "CHRIST, our Passover, is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the Feast."

"And the Disciples did as JESUS had ap-

pointed them: and they made ready the Pass-over."

Let us proceed, then, to consider "THE PREPARATION."

I. And first: there are many who will think they have nothing to do with this particular branch of the subject.

They do not go to the Holy Communion. They have not made up their minds to go. "The Preparation," they say, concerns only those that do go.

How common, for instance, and how readily made, is the answer: "I am not worthy, I am not fit, to go!" as if that settled the whole matter. Yea, very frequently persons will even pride themselves on their greater humility in thus confessing their unworthiness, and dwell very much, not on their own faults, but on the faults of those who are communicants.

Now there is a very great mistake, a very great delusion, here. This answer does not by any means settle the matter, as many seem to think.

Let us sift it a little, and we shall see.

What do you mean by being unworthy? Do you *really feel* your unworthiness, as a sinner, burdened with many sins, and longing to be delivered from them through the Blood of

CHRIST? Then, your course and duty is very clear. Resolve, in God's strength, to turn from your sins, and to amend your life. Show that you are in earnest, that you really do feel your unworthiness, by seeking truly for pardon, for deliverance from sin, for more grace. And so come. Come *as an unworthy sinner*, a true penitent. Come to the Altar, not because you are perfect, but to be made better. Come in all your unworthiness, if it be sincerely felt, and not a mere excuse! To such, above all, does our dear LORD say, in His Holy Sacrament: "Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden: and I will refresh you."

But this, it is to be feared, is not the end of the matter. I fear that the great majority of those who say they are not fit, and not worthy, do not care to be made worthy. They do not feel, in very deed, their unworthiness. It is too often an empty profession, made without being felt; a "kind of subterfuge," as has been well said, "to get rid of an unpleasant topic;"¹ or, perhaps, to soothe and still the prickings of conscience by what seems so humble, so plausible, so Christian a way of speaking, "I am not worthy to come."

But what is the real truth? what is at the

¹ See *Five Plain Sermons*, by Rev. W. H. Cleaver.

bottom of all? Oh! let not Satan hide us from ourselves in this matter!

Is it not this—a heart not right in the sight of God? Cherishing some sin it will not give up, or a worldly life it will not forego? unconcerned, really, about spiritual things, and so far from feeling its unworthiness, in reality caring and feeling only too little about sin and about God?

It is the old story again: the piece of ground, the yoke of oxen, the marriage—worldly business and pleasure put *first*, and God and the soul *second*. I have *these* to attend to, and “therefore I cannot come. I pray thee, have me excused.”

And mark, mark carefully, the delusion that follows. The Holy Communion is thrown aside, as a person would throw aside an unpleasant responsibility. He takes out a licence for sin and worldliness, and thinks he is not so guilty as others because he does not receive the Sacrament, because that responsibility, he says, is not upon him!

Oh! miserable delusion of Satan! as if “sin must not bring forth death” in the non-communicant as well as in the communicant! as if there were not *two* sides to the question, *two* sins in the case, *two* responsibilities to be accountable for, both leading really to the same

end—one, indeed, the sin of unworthy partaking, which is presumption; the other, the sin of not partaking at all, which is disobedience.

There are two Parables of our blessed LORD, bearing upon this subject, one of which is sometimes dwelt upon to the exclusion of the other. The unworthy guest, "who had not on a wedding garment," was indeed shut out. But what happened to those who would not *come at all*? The very same fate—they too were shut out. "Verily I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of My Supper."

No: there is no real freedom from responsibility in this line of argument—"I am not worthy." It is merely flying from one evil to rush into another; like a man who, in his eager desire to avoid one precipice, falls blindly down another. To say "I am not fit," is, in reality, to say, "I am not living as a Christian ought to live." It is to prefer sin and the world to CHRIST, to fall down that precipice on one side, as the guilty partaker falls down on the other; *both* ending in the same abyss, both to meet in "the same outer darkness" of that "bottomless pit," "where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth!"

No: there is no safe, no consistent, no *honest* course open to a man who professes to be a

Christian, but to confess and forsake his sin, and to obey the Word of CHRIST: to "make ready" within his heart the Sacrifice of the Passover, the holy, sin-renouncing, preparation for a devout Communion. "And the Disciples did as JESUS had appointed, and they made ready the Passover."

II. But further: there are still some, I can well believe, who will not yet feel satisfied or convinced: who are not altogether careless or worldly, but are honestly afraid of undertaking what seems to them a *new* and serious responsibility.

But, surely, here again there is great error and misconception. Properly speaking Holy Communion does not create any *fresh* responsibility, which is not already yours. The vows of God's service, remember, are already upon you. The responsibility of holy obedience is indeed attached to you, *not* because of the Holy Communion, but by virtue of your Christian Name and Calling, by virtue of "the solemn vow, promise, and profession," already made in your Baptism, and already ratified, by your own mouth, in the most solemn manner at your Confirmation.

As has been well said by a recent writer on the subject: "There is no sin or licence which

attendance at Holy Communion would restrain a person from committing, which is not already forbidden by the 'solemn vow, promise, and profession' made in Baptism, and renewed in Confirmation."¹

In reality, and looking at the subject from a proper point of view, the Holy Communion is rather the means and help towards carrying out the obligations which are *already* ours as Christians; not the undertaking of *new* ones.

The responsibility as regards Holy Communion, lies really not in coming, but in neglecting to come. For all this while, remember, as long as we stay away, we are adding continually to the fearful list of responsibilities unfulfilled, —of vows and solemn promises unkept. Our Christian vow is broken again and again, and our accountability increased by the continuance of our neglect.

And still some one whispers, All this is true. But yet I am afraid, I am so weak, I shall surely fall away again, I shall not be able to live up to the high standard of devout Communion.

And why not? Dost thou forget Whom

¹ See "Thoughts on Holy Communion," by the Rev. W. W. English.

thou servest, and Who is with thee? "Why art thou so fearful, O thou of little faith?" Is He not able to make thee stand? able to lift thee up if thou fallest? Did ever any try to serve Him, seek to Him in earnest, obey His Word, and not be sustained by Him? Shall not the very grace of the Holy Sacrament endue thee with a new life, replenish thee with a Divine strength, so that thou shalt not fear? Yea, what saith the promise of the Scripture? "God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Fear indeed thy weakness; but fear it rather *without Communion*, without CHRIST's Presence, without that Special Help, than with it. Receive; and then though afterwards the storm of temptation rise high, and the wind be boisterous, lo! He comes to thee walking upon the water in the watches of the night! His Voice which *was* far off, which before thou hearest not, thou shalt now hear close unto thee, saying, through the appointed Sacrament of His Presence, "It is I, be not afraid."

"Make, then, ready the Passover." Prepare the Sacrifice; purify thyself for the Feast of Holy Communion. It is JESUS Who bids thee do it; and when thou hast done it, He will

come Himself and sit down with thee. "He will keep the Passover at thy house."

"And the Disciples did as Jesus had appointed; and they made ready the Passover."

III. And yet again: for I seem not yet to exhaust the variety of objections which Christians make, some wilful, some mistaken, to that Holy Ordinance, which is the very Essence of their religion; without which the Christian Faith loses its real character, and ceases, in fact, to be CHRIST'S Religion.

A non-communicant, strictly speaking, ceases to be a member of the Christian Body. He is by his own act excommunicated, and whatever God's mercy may do, (upon which no one must presume,) as far as his own line of conduct is concerned, he simply repudiates the Christian Faith, and all his claim to its blessings, privileges, and hopes.

This fact, it may be observed, is recognised by the proper discipline of the Church, according to which only communicants are considered qualified members of the Church.

But from the question of unworthiness and responsibility, I will pass briefly to that of *fitness*: what constitutes fitness for the Holy Sacrament,—the necessary qualification.

Even earnest persons often misunderstand this.

Wilful sin, consciously persevered in, of course disqualifies for Holy Communion; as in fact, it cuts off a man from CHRIST, and from the state of Salvation.

On the other hand, it is an utterly erroneous and very mischievous notion to imagine that a person is to make himself perfectly holy, and better than others *first*, and then to come to the Sacrament, as a kind of reward or privilege of his self-attained holiness.

The fact is, perfection can only be attained gradually, by a constant and earnest use of the means of grace, not by keeping away from them. This very fitness, this very holiness you desire, will never be attained by neglecting the Holy Sacrament, but by coming to It. You come to the Altar for the very purpose, (if you are sincere,) of seeking from CHRIST that holiness which by yourself you cannot find.

So that persons, in very imperfect stages of holiness, if only they are really desirous of advancing, may, and should come to Holy Communion,—the weak, the young, the timid, the sorrowful, the troubled with many cares, the unworthy, the often-falling but penitent sinner.

“For the Fountain” of the Precious Blood

is "open for sin, and for all uncleanness" to all who "will wash therein and be clean."

And the Living Bread is the Manna in the Wilderness, bearing up all wayfarers, amid daily weaknesses and the weariness of their journey, "lest they faint in the way."

"Nothing," it has been well said by the writer already quoted, "nothing but wilful, habitual sin, unconfessed and unforsaken, should keep any person from the Holy Communion."

"Make then ready the Passover,"—even the Passover of the New Covenant, though it be at first in a weak imperfect way.

Prepare at once an Altar in thy unworthy heart, and go forth, as Jesus bids, though yet far from the grace which is in store for thee, to the Paschal Supper,—the Easter Communion of His Church.

In the very way of preparation thou shalt not be unguided. "For there shall meet thee a man, bearing a pitcher of water,"—the messenger, if thou wilt, to thee, of cleansing and Absolution.

And when all is prepared, the Master Himself will come, and in His Presence at the Altar-Feast thou shalt find the holiness which, without Him, and apart from Communion, thou seekest but in vain.

“And the Disciples did as Jesus had appointed them, and they made ready the Pass-over.”

IV. But one thought more can be added now. Supposing a Christian, listening to these words, to say, as he should, Well, I must give up that which makes me unfit; I must not be afraid of the blessed responsibility attaching to my Christian calling; I must go and seek for grace and holiness, if I desire it, in the Sacrament, not apart from it. *But I would make sure* of my preparation before I go. And how shall this be done? The words of S. Paul give the answer,—“Let a man *examine himself*; and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.” No true Christian, and therefore no devout Communicant, can neglect Self-Examination.

And this, observe, should be, not an occasional, hap-hazard thing, but a *daily rule*—a part of each day's devotions. And it should be conducted on principle; we should have before us some definite plan or scheme to guide us in our self-investigation, as, e. g., the Ten Commandments, or the seven deadly sins, or questions upon them, such as may be found in good devotional books; by considering which carefully, going over them every evening, at the

time of our private devotions, we may gauge ourselves, how far we have transgressed in the letter or the spirit, and so learn something of the state of our own hearts, which, generally speaking, is the thing we know least about. As the exhortation in our Communion Office says: "We must search and examine our own consciences, and that not lightly,"—not loosely, vaguely, unsystematically,—and "after the manner of dissemblers with God; but so, that we may come holy and clean to such a Heavenly Feast."

And when it adds, in words sometimes stumbled at, "that if any one require further counsel or comfort, he should come to God's Minister, and open his grief, that by the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of Absolution," the Church rightly provides, as she is bound to do, for a need often felt in a sincere self-examination, but not of course appreciated by those who do not search themselves,—the need of a spiritual Guide, in so difficult a work, where so much has to be learned which our own too partial eye cannot discover; the need too, sometimes, of a troubled conscience to be set at rest, and freed from its burden, that "it may go on its way rejoicing."

In the innermost recesses, then, of a purified heart, "make ready the Passover." Cleanse

thyself from thy sins at the Foot of the Cross. Offer the sacrifice of a broken contrite spirit in union with the great Sacrifice of thy Redeemer. For lo! even now He goeth before thee, along the Way of Sorrows, preparing Himself as the very Paschal Lamb—by prayer, by toil, by much desire—in the stillness of Bethany, in the night-watch on the Mount, in the agony of Gethsemane!

Be then with Him, in His Solitude and His Passion at this time. And then thou shalt be with Him also,—a happy, holy guest,—in the Feast of the True Passover, and in the Resurrection from the dead.

“And the Disciples did as JESUS had appointed them, and they made ready the Passover.”

I will close with three brief reflections on what has gone before.

1. First,—new instruction, new light, remember, involves new responsibility. When Sacramental truth is made known to us, it must be followed by Sacramental practice. To know all about the Holy Communion, and yet not to be communicants, must leave us without excuse. “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

2. Secondly, it is very important, if we desire to become communicants, that we fix

for ourselves a *definite time*, a particular day, on which to receive our first Communion, and make our preparation against that Day.

Otherwise, in all probability, our desire will come to nothing. We shall go on hoping and desiring for *some* Day, which will never arrive. "Promise unto the LORD your God, and keep it."

8. Thirdly, those who are communicants should increase, as in devoutness, as in regularity, so in the *frequency* of their attendance. There is no reason why we should limit ourselves to one, perhaps scanty, hard-drawn rule, through all the stages of our spiritual life. We should not be satisfied with ourselves till we had reached the rule set before us in the Scripture, of the at least weekly Celebration,—
"the First Day of the Week, when the Disciples came together to break Bread."

"Very early in the morning," it is said, they went forth to meet the Risen JESUS on that LORD's Day. How can we imitate them better than by a growing love for the Early Celebration; remembering that we too seek, in mystery, the Spiritual Body and the Risen Presence? seeking It early with Mary Magdalene, and the Beloved S. John, and the penitent Peter. "They came unto the Sepulchre at the rising of the Sun."

One more Lecture, on Sunday next, will bring this series to a close. It will carry on our subject to that point beyond which we cannot go—the mysterious connection between the Holy Communion and the Resurrection, which our LORD has intimated in those words: “Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal Life: and I will RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY,”—a blessed promise meet for the Joy of Easter Day.

SERMON VII.

THE COMMUNION AND THE RESURRECTION.

S. JOHN VI. 54, AND 1 COR. XV. 49.

"Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal Life; AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY."
"As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

IN our considerations hitherto respecting the Holy Communion, we have confined our view to its nature and effects upon our spiritual being *here*:—THE MEMORIAL, ever offered on the Altars of the Church, of the one great Sacrifice; the TRUE PRESENCE of CHRIST in the Sacramental Mystery; and the PARTICIPATION, through divinely-appointed Symbols, of His very Humanity, for the sanctifying, transforming, and perfecting of our own.

But here and there, throughout the Scripture, glimpses are given us of a still greater Mystery

in connection with the Holy Sacrament—openings up of depths of Light which we can fathom but a little way.

Our state not only here, but *hereafter*, our condition in the Resurrection Life, is spoken of, in various passages, as in some way depending upon the communication of the Body and Blood of CHRIST; as though the risen nature we shall then wear—the glorified body, soul, and spirit of that State—were being, *even now*, formed within us by our Sacramental Participation of CHRIST, of His Spiritual Body, of His incorruptible Humanity.

Our LORD, in the text, you will observe, speaks of life, communicated sacramentally, even now; Life which is to reach beyond the present sphere of being, to be Eternal—begun now, begun on earth, through partaking spiritually of “His Flesh and Blood;” the germ, as it were, in us, of His own immortal Manhood: “Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, *hath Eternal Life.*”

And this germ, springing up within us, unfolding itself gradually—the new nature of the Second Adam in the partakers of “His Flesh and Blood,”—shall be developed, at the last, into the Resurrection-State, by His Power, in the Image of His perfect Humanity: “I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY.”

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So that, by a strange reversal, as He partook of our flesh and blood, that He might become the Son of Man, so we are made partakers of *His*, that we may be made the sons of God, "the children of the Resurrection."

Or, to return to the words of S. Paul, in our text: "As we have borne the image of the earthy"—the nature of the first Adam,—“we shall also bear the image of the heavenly,” i.e., be transformed into the Nature of the Second Adam, by the communication, in Sacramental Mystery, of His ever-living Humanity; until, as the Apostle himself hath promised, the Mystery is solved and laid open; and, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

Let us, then, consider to-night the Communion and the Resurrection: the bearing of one upon the other, as far as Holy Scripture lifts the veil.

So this course of sermons will close, leaving us looking onward to the future: waiting, in “earnest expectation,” for the full unfolding of Sacraments and Mysteries, and their work within us, “at the last Day.” And Easter¹—this bright, earthly image of the Resurrection,—

¹ This sermon was preached on Easter Day.

shall find us, as is meet, looking forward, in holy anticipation, "from corruption to incorruption: from dishonour to glory: from weakness to power; from the Natural body to the Spiritual Body:" catching already, in our Eucharistic Hymn, the echo of the Song of the Resurrection, yea, feeling at the Altar, in Holy Communion, the risen and endless Life already begun in us; the saying that is written already beginning to come to pass: "Death is swallowed up in victory!" "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?"

I. First, then, to turn to the Scriptures.

The Resurrection is constantly spoken of as the *perfected* condition of our restored Human Nature. The long, strange line of our human history may be said to begin with the Fall, and to end in the Resurrection. After Humanity had fallen, in the first Adam, it was to find a perfect type again in the Second Adam, CHRIST our LORD, GOD Himself, "manifest in the flesh." Death was to go on working in the human race through Adam: and meanwhile, and along with it, Life was to be gradually supplanting it, through CHRIST, the new and sinless Adam, until, at length, "mortality should be swallowed up of Life," and the Re-

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urrection State exhibit our human nature once more re-wrought into perfection, and made incorruptible.

So S. Paul, when speaking of the Resurrection, says: "As in Adam all die, so in CHRIST shall all be made alive," i.e., deathless.

And again: "By man came death," i.e., by the first Adam: "by man came also the Resurrection of the dead," i.e., by CHRIST restoring Humanity again, till its triumph over death was re-established.

But it is to be observed that the Scriptures speak of this restoration of man to immortality as a *gradual* process, begun in the midst of his corruption here, and working on; and as it works, subduing that corruption by transforming it: so that at last, in the words of the Apostle, "this very corruptible puts on incorruption: and this mortal puts on immortality."

The likeness of the First Adam is lost in that of the Second, the "image of the earthy in the image of the Heavenly."

But it is a gradual process, or development. This is implied in S. Paul's well-known illustration of the Resurrection-Nature. He compares it, you will remember, to a seed or grain of wheat, "sown in corruption," which unfolds or develops gradually into the full-grown

plant—"first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

In like manner (to use a frequent expression among the ancient Fathers,) the "seed of Immortality" is sown, *even now*, in our corruptible being, the "eternal life" of the Nature or Humanity of the Second Adam; and goes on growing within us to its full maturity of Form and Type in the Resurrection.

And then, that which is sown in corruption, after having passed through its various stages of growth, "is raised up," at the last, "in incorruption." Man's nature drops its mortality, like the bare husk which is left in the ground, and appears, fully developed into its immortal State in the great Harvest Field of God. "So," says S. Paul, "is the Resurrection of the dead."

But the Scriptures reveal still more. This gradual restoration of immortality to our human nature is described as the "*forming of Christ*" within us; or, as it is otherwise expressed, "a putting off the old Adam, and a putting on the New." That is to say, the gradual process consists, (as I have shown more fully in a former Lecture,) in being incorporated into CHRIST, and receiving continual communications of His Nature, His perfect Humanity,

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till the old nature of the first Adam recedes, and gives way before it, and is absorbed into it, or rather, is transformed by it.

So that even here, while weighed down by "the Body of this Death," the Apostle could say: "It is no more I that live, but CHRIST Who liveth in me."

And we may go one step further still. When we ask again of the Scriptures, how,—or by what means,—this gradual process, which is the formation of CHRIST in us and the Hope of our risen glory, takes place, "and what is the pledge to assure us thereof," we come back to our LORD's own Words in S. John's Gospel, where He teaches us repeatedly that it is, however mysteriously, "the Communion, or Imparting, of His Body and Blood," which quickens our nature into immortality. It is by Sacramental Participation of His Humanity, as we have learned before, that His Life is formed in us. And that Life issues, as we learn now, in the Resurrection-State,—in the likeness of His own Perfect Risen Manhood.

So He says: "Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath Eternal Life." This is the means of its communication even now.

And again: "Whoso eateth My Flesh and

drinketh My Blood, *dwelleth in Me and I in him.*" This is the means of its continuation and perfection.

And again: "I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY." This is the issue and consummation of Sacramental Communion, of the imparted Humanity of CHRIST,—even the Resurrection in the Heavenly Image, which has been fashioned little by little by His own mysterious working, and at last made perfect; that which has been the desire, and vision, and aspiration, alike of Prophet, Psalmist, and Apostle; in which the longings of the Old Testament and the hopes of the New converge together; one crying to the other and saying, "When I awake up after His Likeness I shall be satisfied with it;" and the other making answer, in the fuller assurance of the "Life and Immortality brought to light by the Gospel," "*We know* that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

"And every one that hath this Hope in him,"—the beginning of this Likeness,—"*purifieth himself, even as He is pure.*"

And it is noteworthy, that in the writings of the Fathers of the Church,—more especially perhaps of those who lived nearest to the times of the Apostles, this particular view or aspect

of the Holy Eucharist, as communicating the Resurrection-Nature, is brought out into the greatest prominence.

For instance: S. Irenæus, who lived little more than fifty years after S. John's death, speaking of the Holy Communion, uses these remarkable words: "As the Bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the Invocation of God, is no longer common Bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of *two* realities, earthly and heavenly: so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the Resurrection to Eternal Life."

How in these words of S. Irenæus, we seem to catch the ring of S. John's own record of CHRIST's teaching: "Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Indeed a still earlier writer, one who was actually a Disciple of S. John,—Ignatius,—says, in words I have read during the past week, very much to the same effect: "I desire the Bread of God, which is the Flesh of JESUS CHRIST; and for drink, His Blood, which is Love Incorruptible and Eternal Life."¹

And later on, the great Teacher, Athanasius,

¹ See S. Ignatii Ep. Z' ad Romanos, (Patres Apostolici, tom. ii.)

whose name is associated undyingly with the Creed of the Church, comments on these words of our LORD, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life," as follows: "It is as though He had said, 'My Body, which is shown and given for the world, shall be given in food, that it may be spiritually distributed to every one, and become to each a preservative unto the Resurrection of Eternal Life.'"¹

II. But again: words like these lead us to think of a *further* revelation of the Scripture in connection with the same Mystery; I mean the Resurrection more especially of the Body, as an integral part of our perfect human nature.

There is much here to try our faith. On the one hand S. Paul says, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." On the other he says, "He that raised up CHRIST from the dead shall also quicken your mortal *bodies*,"—give them life and immortality.

We cannot indeed *explain* the mystery.

But it would seem from our LORD's teaching that in some mysterious way, even the very Body "is preserved unto Everlasting Life" by Holy Communion; to be "raised up at the

¹ See Appendix to Sermons by Rev. W. W. English.

last day," "a Spiritual Body," which has been cleansed gradually from the properties of "this corruptible flesh and blood;" and, though the same, shall be no more "a Natural Body," but transformed into a Spiritual Substance, like CHRIST's, after the Resurrection, by means of the communication, sacramentally, of His Spiritual Body to us. And so again S. Paul says, "He shall change *our vile Body*, that it may be fashioned like unto His Glorious or Spiritual Body." We know not *how*, but "according to the mighty working," i.e., the power of His Life in us,—communicated as He has ordained: "CHRIST, the First-fruits; afterward, they that are CHRIST's at His coming," "changed into the same Image;" the children of God yet made like unto the "Son of Man."

This Mystery, you will observe,—the connection of the Resurrection of the *Body* with the Holy Sacrament,—is specially alluded to in our Communion Office, where it is said, "the Body of our LORD JESUS CHRIST and the Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST preserve '*thy body*' and soul unto everlasting life." So, too, in the Homily of our Church "concerning the Sacrament," we read to the same purpose the following: "The Communion of the Body and Blood of the LORD is a marvellous incorpo-

ration, which, by the operation of the HOLY GHOST, is, through faith, wrought in the souls of the faithful, whereby not only their souls live to eternal life, but they surely trust to win *to their bodies* a Resurrection to immortality."

But it is time to draw to an end. I will close with one brief reflection.

How marvellous in the Resurrection-State shall appear the end and power of Holy Communion in faithful souls !

Here, indeed, and till the LORD come, and the dead are raised,—all is mystery. We know little,—“but in part,”—the transforming process that is going on within. Some partake in their sins, and know not the blight that passes over their being, when they are guilty of the “Body and Blood of the LORD.” Others refuse to partake altogether, forgetting that without this “Living Bread” their souls and bodies cannot be fashioned for the incorruptible Nature of the Resurrection. Others, again, loving, penitent, self-distrusting,—the chosen ones of God,—ofttimes *see not* the Brightness when the LORD is present, “a cloud overshadowing them,” and mourn for the few tokens of the new Nature which as yet appear, albeit they have received many Communions. “JESUS has been so long time with them, yet

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have they not known Him!" But, must it not be so, at least in great measure, throughout all our earthly life, as regards this Holy Sacrament especially?

Of old, in the wilderness, "man did eat angels' food; for He sent them meat enough;" although they discerned it not, and asked, "What is it?" So now, even to him that overcometh, it is the "Hidden Manna" which is given,—the "Bread from heaven," with life-giving properties all indiscernible as yet, supporting and spiritualizing, "by angels' food," this our human nature in its earthly pilgrimage. And we know it not. Still we ask, "What is it?"

And the words come back to us which were spoken to Israel of old,—instructive, comforting words,—explaining how the mystery of Communion and its hidden quickenings,—so unknown, so trying, often so unsatisfying *here*,—shall be fully unfolded in the everlasting Land. The words are these: "Thou shalt remember," in the good Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, "all the way which He led thee these forty years in the wilderness, . . . and He *humbled* thee, and *suffered thee to hunger*, and" (mark what is said) "fed thee with Manna which *thou knewest not*, neither did thy fathers know."

Even so shall it be in the Resurrection, with each one of God's Spiritual Israel. When at length,—thy journeyings over and the River safely crossed,—thou shalt rest in that good Land beneath "the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God," then thou shalt trace back all the way by which the LORD hath led thee thither,—the mysterious path, the gradual progress, the hidden transformation; thy first Communion, and the next, and then the slow advance, and the unperceived benefit, and the spiritual hunger *still*, even in continual communions, (the Living Bread all the while sustaining thee and changing thee, unknown to thyself;) and thy last Sacrament, in the hour of departure, with its unearthly refreshment; and thy Table prepared before thee, with the Saints in Paradise; and "the white robe;" and the more unveiled Presence; and thy own nature putting on, growing more and more into, its incorruption; waiting for the Resurrection.

Verily, *then*, thou shalt remember all the way. Thou shalt see clearly, in that Day, concerning thy Communions, that the "LORD humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with MANNA *which thou knewest not*, neither did thy fathers know."

To you then, dear brethren, who have fol-

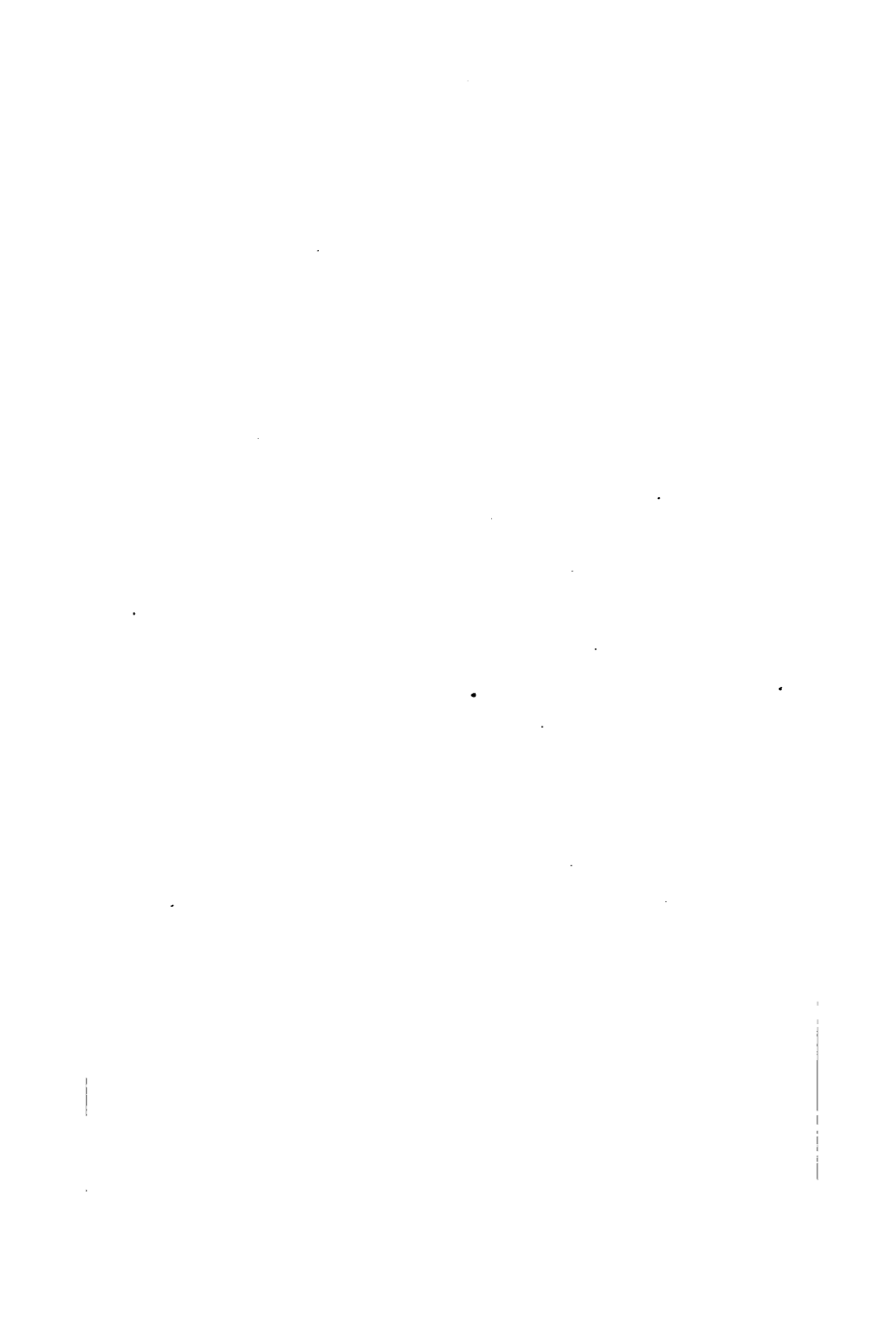
lowed this course of sermons, and to your serious consideration, I now commend them.

To all: to those, especially, who have gathered round this Altar at the One, Holy, Memorial-Sacrifice, and have found peace; to those,—not least of all,—souls, ever to be watched over and longed for,—whom it was given me to prepare for Confirmation and receive to First Communion.

If they have convinced you of at least your duty, act upon the conviction *at once*. If they have taught you any new lesson, practise it. If you have not understood, or cared for, or agreed with them, think of them yet again.

And may it be given you to know the LORD, in His Sacrament, here, with ever-increasing knowledge, in the newness of a Risen Life; and *hereafter* to “see Him as He is,”—“the MANNA which *once* thou knewest not,”—before the Golden Altar, in the great Easter of the Church on high.

There, having borne the image of the earthy, you shall bear for ever the image of the Heavenly, and the LORD’s own Word be fulfilled in you: “WHOSO EATETH MY FLESH, AND DRINKETH MY BLOOD, HATH ETERNAL LIFE; AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY.”



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the 1990s, the incidence of *S. flexneri* has increased in the United Kingdom [10]. In the United States, *S. flexneri* has been reported as the most common serotype in the 1990s [11].

There is a paucity of data on the epidemiology of *S. flexneri* in the United Kingdom. In the 1980s, *S. flexneri* was the most common serotype isolated from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [12]. In the 1990s, *S. flexneri* was the most common serotype isolated from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [13]. In the 1990s, *S. flexneri* was the most common serotype isolated from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [13].

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Table 1. The mean (SD) age, height, weight, and body mass index (BMI) of the participants in the study

Measure	Mean (SD)
Age (years)	12.5 (0.5)
Height (cm)	152.5 (6.5)
Weight (kg)	45.5 (10.5)
BMI (kg m ⁻²)	19.5 (3.5)

the study. The mean (SD) age, height, weight, and BMI of the participants in the study are shown in Table 1. The participants were divided into two groups based on their BMI. The first group consisted of participants with a BMI of 18.5 or less, and the second group consisted of participants with a BMI of 19.5 or more.

The participants were then divided into two groups based on their age. The first group consisted of participants aged 12 years or less, and the second group consisted of participants aged 13 years or more. The participants were then divided into two groups based on their gender. The first group consisted of male participants, and the second group consisted of female participants.

The participants were then divided into two groups based on their level of physical activity. The first group consisted of participants who were sedentary, and the second group consisted of participants who were active. The participants were then divided into two groups based on their level of physical activity. The first group consisted of participants who were sedentary, and the second group consisted of participants who were active.

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